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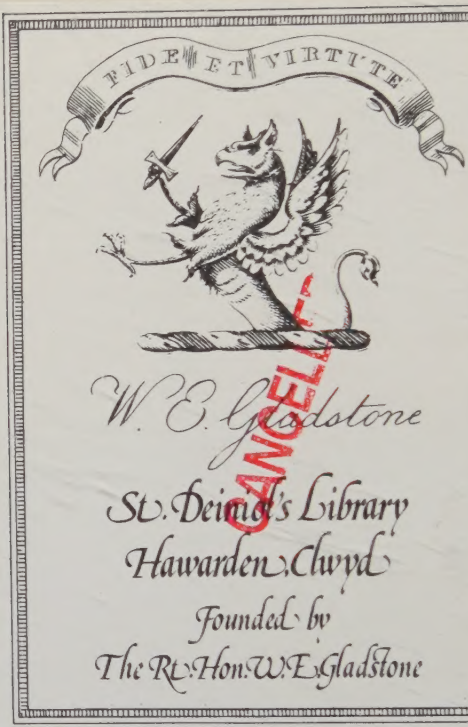

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The Doctrine of the Atonement

And its Historical Evolution

AND

Religion and Modern Culture

BY THE LATE

AUGUSTE SABATIER

PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS, AND DEAN OF THE PROTESTANT THEOLOGICAL FACULTY

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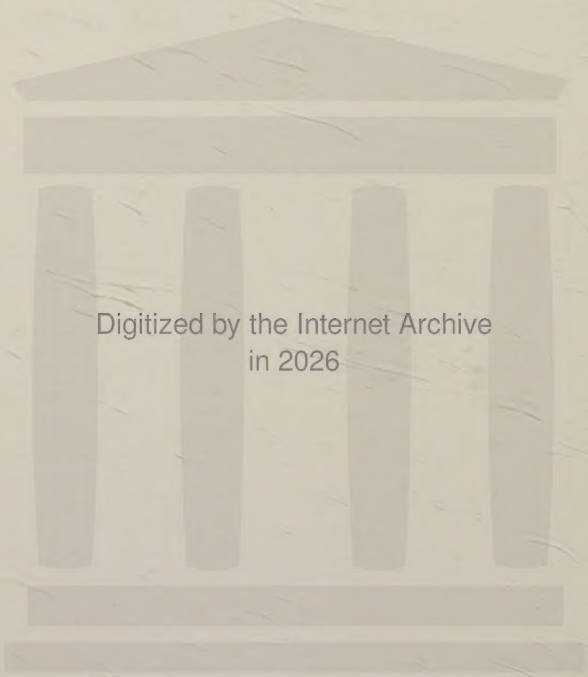

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

AND ITS HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

FOREWORD

THE following treatise is an attempt at a systematic application of the historical method to the study of religious beliefs and doctrines, in order to show, by a practical example, the nature and fruitfulness of the method. The author does not believe in spontaneous generation in the realm of thought any more than in the domain of life. For the most recent of harvests must yet have had a seed-time. Men's ideas arise and are linked together just like external events; they advance now by association and synthesis, now by contradiction and analysis. This is especially true of religious ideas. Nothing is more interesting than to follow them through their metamorphoses; nor could anything be more

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useful; for to investigate the inevitable transformations they undergo is the safest way to criticise them objectively and scientifically. That the forms assumed by the ideas which prevail at the present time are immutable and final, is far from being the author's belief. These forms themselves are temporary. In this chain of evolution each generation has its part to perform both in thinking and in acting. The important matter is that it should contribute to both, while remaining faithful to the divine law, the consciousness of which it has achieved.

Nor is this scepticism, any more than what was in the mind of Paul when he said that, having become a man, he had put away childish things; adding, further, that his present knowledge was imperfect and would be done away when the time came for him to know even as he had been known of God. Yea, and for us, just as for Paul, these three even now abide: faith in the Spirit which never ceases to work with the spirits of men,

hope in His Providence which overrules all the changes of human history, and, above all, love, which even in the things of time realizes something of the eternal (1 Cor. xiii.).

Paris, *January* 13, 1901.

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THE ATONEMENT

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE

In the Christian consciousness, the forgiveness of sins and the death of Christ are intimately and absolutely related. But when it comes to defining the nature of the connection, explanations differ, theories are found to be contradictory, and the discussion commenced nineteen centuries ago still goes on.

There are two opposite ways of understanding this connection: either the death of Christ may be looked upon as the cause of the forgiveness of sins, or else, by inverting the terms, as the means and the consequence. In the first case, it will be argued that the death of the Innocent One caused God to forgive the guilty, because satisfaction was made

to Divine justice. Here *satisfaction* is the essential and all-important word. In the second case, on the contrary, forgiveness is the result of God's free and sovereign interposition. It is because God wills to forgive, and because He is Love, that He sent His Son into the world; thus Christ's coming, work, and death are only the means devised in the plan of His Providence to realize in humanity His work of mercy and salvation.

In a word, two main conceptions of Christianity are here in presence and in conflict. The one starts from the forensic premiss of the penal law: *culpam pœna absolvit*; the other, from the specifically Evangelical principle of Love forgiving where there is repentance and faith. The thought of Christians, from the very first, has ever oscillated between these two views. They have never succeeded in reconciling them, because they are contradictory, corresponding in fact to two stages in the development of the religious and moral consciousness. The first is to the second what

the spirit of Rabbinical legalism is to the inspiration of Christ. It is the antithesis between external social law and inner deep moral life. Vaguely conscious of this opposition, theological speculation has been unable to settle on any definitive formula. No theory of Atonement has become an article of faith in any Church. The doctrine is always uncertain, and discussion remains open and free.

It is not our intention in these pages to give a detailed history of the doctrine of Atonement,[1] but to inquire into the origin of the conceptions which enter into it, to sketch the important phases through which Christian thought has passed, to set forth the tendency of the evolution and the direction it is taking, and to furnish at least a glimpse of the end it must reach.

[1] This history has been admirably written by C. Baur, *Die Christliche Lehre von der Versoehnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwickelung*, 1838; by A. Ritschl, *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung u. Versoehnung*, 1870–74. Cf. also E. Ménégoz, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ch. vii., 1894.

FIRST PART

Biblical Conceptions

I.—The Narrative of the Fall of Adam, Genesis iii.

Since the Apostle Paul, in his famous parallel between the two Adams, linked the redemptive work of the second to the sin of the first, the third chapter of Genesis has remained the basis of the dogma of Redemption, establishing its necessity and fixing its content. Yet, the passage in Romans v. 12 stands alone in the New Testament. There is nothing in the preaching of Jesus and of the ancient prophets to recall it, even in a slight degree. Paul, a disciple of Gamaliel before he became a follower of Christ, borrowed this fine oratorical amplification from Rabbinical

speculation,[1] and whatever the authority of the great Apostle, one may yet ask whether it is possible for Christian thought to remain eternally wedded to an idea the origin of which is, after all, to be sought outside the Bible, and which the author of the Epistle to the Romans incidentally uses as an illustration. Can the scheme which traditional dogmatics has drawn from it, in order that it might be made to include the dogma of Redemption, still command the assent of our mind and conscience? For the Apostle Paul, the Rabbis and their contemporaries, the old narrative in Genesis stood for a positive historical fact; is it the same for us? It is well to weigh the following considerations:—

1*st*. The discovery of the cuneiform tablets which formed the palatine library at Nineveh has revealed the fact that the cosmogony of Genesis is not original, but points to a Hebrew compilation and edition of a primitive Chaldean mythology. It is therefore

[1] Ferd. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, 2nd edit., 1897.

impossible, unless one is willing to deceive oneself, to ascribe the Biblical narratives as a whole, up to the Deluge inclusively, to supernatural revelation, and to see in them anything but a succession of myths originating, like the Hebrews themselves, in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates;

2*nd*. The prolonged existence of prehistoric man during the whole of the quaternary period and perhaps beyond, the idea we gather of his primitive condition here below from the instruments, weapons, and meagre industry, the remains of which he has almost everywhere left behind him; all that slow and protracted development in a state of infancy and barbarism is out of all proportion and without any sort of connection with the myth of Eden or of the Golden Age which we find elsewhere. The positive view of the actual appearance of humanity on our planet, and of the humble and precarious existence led by our ancestors for thousands and thousands of years, has opened up horizons wholly

unsuspected hitherto, and has thus completely renewed our conception of the history of origins;

3rd. Comparative anatomy, embryology, and the history of the forms of life on the earth make it impossible for us to doubt that the higher animal species were the ancestors of the human species, and that a bond of organic filiation links mankind to the chain formed by living creatures;

4th. The idea of a primitive state of perfection, justice, knowledge, felicity, and immortality, into which man is said to have been created immediately by God, is a poetic dream or a fiction of abstract logic. This notion is contradicted not only by every historical analogy, but even by the narrative of Genesis itself;

5th. The phenomena of generation and of birth, of growth, decline, and finally death are for physical organisms necessary phases of one and the same vital development, and one is not more accidental or supernatural than all

the rest. It is no longer possible, nowadays, for a man of culture to hold that physical death was introduced into the world, supernaturally, in order to punish the sin of Adam. Moreover, the words of Genesis, far from presenting primitive man to us as actually or potentially immortal, describes him as, from his very origin and not on account of his sin, subject to the law according to which "dust shall return to dust";

6*th*. It may be argued that the myth originally had a meaning and a purpose very different from those discovered by the older exegesis. The notion of a fall in the traditional sense and the doctrine of original sin, transmitted with its guilt to the entire race, are foreign to it. In eating of the forbidden fruit, man was doubtless disobedient; but he none the less acquired thereby the knowledge of good and evil, which was an undoubted advance upon his former state. Had he been able at the same time to eat of the fruit of the tree of life,

he would have become immortal and as one of the elohim. But the latter prevented him. Hence the intermediary state in which man found himself arrested, capable of knowledge like the elohim, but subject to death just as the animals, and condemned to lead a precarious life, full of misery, strife, and labour. The mythological drama of Genesis seems to indicate the first awakening of the moral consciousness with the feeling of the painful contradictions which ever accompany it. It cannot serve as an historical foundation for the corresponding drama of Redemption. The dogma of the Fall henceforth remains unsubstantiated; it must of necessity be radically transformed and liberated from the old mythological form, if it is not to be stifled beneath it.

II.—The Conception of Sacrifice

The second notion on which the dogma rests, is the idea of a substitution of persons in punishment, *satisfactio vicaria*: the victim

taking the place of the sinner, and representing him in the endurance of the penalty for sin. Such is, properly speaking, the doctrine of expiation. It was thought possible to deduce it from a kind of universal revelation, witnessed to by the ritual of sacrifice, which everywhere prevailed. But is that the real meaning of primitive sacrifices and, in particular, of Biblical sacrifices?

The pious Semite felt himself, before his own particular Divinity, in the position of a slave, *ebed*, before his master, and of a subject before his king. That is why the word *ebed* so frequently enters into the composition of Semitic proper names.[1] It is this feeling of absolute dependence or *belonging* which characterizes the religion of the entire race, and more specially of Israel. The worshipper, therefore, acted towards his god as towards an earthly master. It was not lawful to come before him with empty hands (*cf.* Mal. i. 7–9). The offering which a person brought

[1] *Ebed melek, Abdiel, Obadiah,* or in Arab., *Abdallah,* etc.

to the altar was the acknowledgment of this sovereignty, a tribute and rightful homage.

But this political conception of sacrifice is, however, not the primitive one. Numerous traces in the Bible reveal a far more ancient view: the god eats like men, he requires food, and the sacrifice is at first an offering of food. The prophets still call the altar "the table of Yahveh," and what is offered, the so-called meat of Yahveh (Ezech. xli. 22; Mal. i. 12–14; Mich. vi. 6; Ps. l. 12 and 13, etc.). Later on, as a result of relative spiritualization, men came to think that the god fed on the odour of the burnt offering, and that this odour was pleasing to him (1 Sam. xxvi. 19; Gen. viii. 20; Ex. xxix. 18, etc.).[1]

The worshipper naturally chose for his offering the choicest and best of his possessions. Young fat animals with delicate and

[1] From this old conception the Epistle to the Ephesians (v. 2) draws a metaphor which it applies to the death of Christ, *θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας*.

tender flesh were worth far more than the fruits of the earth, and, of the animal itself, the more savoury parts were also the special portions set apart for the god. See with what severity Malachi reproaches the Jews of his time with offering upon the altar of Yahveh their sick animals (Mal. i. 7–14), a thing they would not dare to do to an earthly king.

There was yet another idea in primitive sacrifices, that of communion, of a close bond, and herein lay the significance of the blood. When two individuals of a different race wished to unite, each made a cut in the other and sucked the other's blood. Henceforth they were considered as of the same kin. Every covenant had thus to be sealed in blood. It was not otherwise with the covenant made with the Divinity. It is the blood that renders the covenant efficacious and binding[1] (Ex. xxiv. 6–8).

The ritual of sacrifice contained in the first

[1] Mark xiv. 24.

chapters of Leviticus was drawn up after and during the period of the second Temple. But the numerous developments dictated by sacerdotal casuistry, and the carefully regulated scale of compensation between the gravity of the fault and the price of the victim, can finally be traced down to the primitive and quite simple ideas we have just set forth. As to the notion of penal substitution, of the exchange of the life and suffering of the victim for the life and suffering of the guilty, it never once appears.

A few remarks will help to establish the nature and significance of the rite of propitiation :—

1*st*. What propitiates God is the fact that He receives something that is agreeable to Him. One must flatter His tastes and please Him by showing Him that, in order to obtain His favour, one does not hesitate in bringing Him of one's very best. The offering blots out the sin because it covers it ; God's eyes resting on the gift, no longer behold the fault. So it comes

that each one offers what he has. If anyone is too poor to bring even two young pigeons, he shall bring *for that wherein he hath sinned* a small measure of fine flour for atonement (Lev. v. 11). It is evident that what Leviticus understands by atonement is something quite other than what the theology of the Church means to-day. Since, in this sacrifice for sin, the blood may be replaced by fine flour, it is not doubtful that the blood was at first offered to God not on account of the penal suffering which it represented, but because, being the life itself, it belonged by right to God, the author of life, and must ever be given up to Him (Lev. xvii. 11).

2*nd*. Blood is the sacred element above all others, and as such possesses, in an eminent degree, the power of purifying and removing uncleanness. So blood is sprinkled not only upon the worshipper, but also upon all the objects that are to be consecrated to God and presented pure before Him — the altar, the sacrificial instruments, the raiment, the

polluted house, the leper who is cured, etc. (Lev. iv. 7, 17; xiv. 51, etc.). All this should be called purification, not atonement. There is no more atonement, properly so called, in all these acts than there is in the Catholic sacrament of baptism, in which the consecrated water is supposed, by its own inherent power, to wash away the original stain.

3rd. The act of laying the hand upon the head of the intended victim is repeated in every form of sacrifice (Lev. i. 4; iii. 2, 8, 13; iv. 4, 24, etc.). But this ritual act symbolizes neither a substitution of persons, nor the transfer of the sins of a man upon the head of an animal. It merely signifies the act of offering freely, the willing surrender of a thing in one's possession, which one consecrates to God. The high-priest lays the sins of the people upon the head of the goat for Azazel, not only by a gesture of the hand, but by a public confession and an express declaration (Lev. xvi. 21). This goat is henceforth unclean; it can no longer be

offered to God; it is sent away into the wilderness in order that it may bear the iniquities of the people. Azazel, to whom the goat is devoted, can only be an evil god, the adversary of Yahveh, a demon who makes his abode in solitary places. On the contrary, the goat set apart for Yahveh has no sin laid upon him; he is sacrificed as a holy victim, and the propitiatory offering influences God, not because the sin has been punished in the victim, but because the latter, being of a fine quality, has produced an agreeable impression upon the one to whom it was offered.

4th. From the old ideas and customs the sacrificial code has drawn a complete system of casuistry in which is carefully set forth the value of the oblation corresponding to each fault. But this very tariff proves that the Levitical sacrifice belongs to quite a different circle of ideas from that of legal atonement.

5th. Finally, it will be noticed that in the Levitical ritual the question is not one of

every sin, but solely of sins of ignorance and of unintentional sins. As to high-handed and deliberate crimes, their authors are to be exterminated; no atonement or satisfaction is possible (Num. xv. 27-30).

In a word, the ideas of substitution and of penal satisfaction are entirely absent from the Biblical sacrifices. To make propitiation for sin, is to cause God to become propitious; that is to say, to obtain His favour, and this one obtains by offering Him savoury food or other things of value. The prophets rose up against this puerile and barbarous conception of worship, this superstitious belief in the value of sacrifice, and proclaimed the voice of conscience.

III.—The Ethical Doctrine of the Prophets

This doctrine constitutes an enormous progress over the old sacerdotal theories. Two elements compose and characterize it: a moral element, justice founded on individual responsibility and reduced to purity of heart

and uprightness of will; and a religious element, divine mercy requiring, in order to be exercised, nothing but the repentance and conversion of the sinner.

These two ideas, the very foundation of the religion of the prophets, are strongly expressed by Ezekiel (xviii. 14–24). The son shall not die for the iniquity of his father. . . . . The soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . . . If the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, he shall live and not die. . . . . Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord, and not rather that he should return from his way and live? . . . .

Hence it is easy to see why the prophets so strongly and ruthlessly attacked the superstitions and interested motives of those who hoped to substitute offerings and sacrifices for repentance, inward justice, purity of heart and hand. "I am full, saith the Lord, of the flesh of your rams and of the fat of your bullocks; I am weary of the blood of lambs

and of goats; your incense is an abomination unto me. . . . . To what purpose are your sacrifices? . . . . Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes, cease to do evil. . . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow . . . ." (Isaiah i. 10–20). All the prophets gave expression to the same protest, all denied the religious and moral value of sacrifices, all absolutely rejected their objective efficacy for atonement (Hosea v. 6, vi. 6; Amos v. 21; Micah vi. 6–9; Jer. vi. 20; Prov. xv. 8; Ps. xl. 6, l. 8 and 21, etc.).

So pure and exalted is the prophets' idea of righteousness that upon it they make the entire destiny of individuals and nations depend. Righteousness is the life of those who practise it, just as sin is the death of those who commit it. Yet this individualistic conception of righteousness does not suffice to account for the unmerited suffering of the best and most righteous portion of the people.

The second Isaiah seems to have specially meditated upon this painful problem, and he has solved it by the creation of that sublime conception of "the Servant of Yahveh" suffering for the sins of his people. Already in Genesis Abraham intercedes for the guilty cities, and God acknowledges that the presence of a handful of righteous men in Sodom and Gomorrah would have sufficed to save them.

The second Isaiah goes farther in the same direction. He beholds "the Servant of the Lord," the faithful of Israel, to whom belong the promises of the future. humbled, stricken, involved in the present ruin of the whole nation, suffering for crimes he has not committed, misfortunes he has not deserved, and becoming by his patience and silent and confident submission the cause of the entire nation's return.[1] Will anyone talk, in this connection, of expiation and of substitution of the innocent for the guilty? We will not quarrel over words; we will only draw atten-

[1] Isaiah liii. *Cf.* Note I. p. 138.

tion to the fact that all these expressions are only imagery and metaphor, as when we say that a mother is punished for the sins of her son, and that she redeems them by her self-sacrifice. This is very different from the idea of judicial substitution. We are here in the presence of one of the great moral laws of history, and one which is also the most fruitful cause of the progress of the conscience. No one can escape from the solidarity of the organic group to which he belongs, and the whole body suffers through the faults or benefits by the virtues of the members who compose it.

It is easy to see how admirably this way of looking upon the *passion* of the righteous under the old covenant, in other words, of "the Servant of the Lord," suits the passion and death of Christ. The Apostles were right in applying it to Him. There was no supernatural prediction, as they imagined, but there is a profound analogy, and we do not think that it is possible, even in our

day, better to appraise the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus than by considering them in this light.

If now we compare the axiom in Ezekiel, establishing the principle of individual responsibility, with the theory in Isaiah that the righteous suffer for the guilty, we discover a contradiction which will constitute, throughout the ages, the chief difficulty of Christian theodicy. But the problem cannot be solved by the theory of judicial atonement; it is one which far transcends the sphere of law. We are face to face with the mysterious ways of God. The terms of the contradiction which even now confronts us are furnished by the very constitution of things. On the one hand, individual responsibility is one of the indefeasible data of the moral conscience; on the other, the fact that some suffer for the faults or benefit by the qualities and virtues of others, is an undeniable datum furnished by our everyday life. How to conciliate these two terms is the task set before theology.

IV.—The Gospel of Jesus

As regards the means of salvation, Jesus' preaching is the revival and complete expansion of that of the prophets. Two questions must be considered: 1*st*, The teaching of Jesus and His good tidings (evangel) concerning the remission of sins; 2*nd*, How He looked upon His sufferings and death, and what connection He established between them and His main work—the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus demands but one condition for salvation and the forgiveness of sins, the sinner's return to God by an act of repentance and of confidence. He takes up and develops the theme of the second Isaiah (Matt. v. 3, *sqq.*; Luke iv. 17; Matt. xi. 28; *cf.* Isaiah lv. 1–9, lvii. 15–16, lxi. 1–2; Ps. ciii. 8–13). And consistently enough with this act of grace, with this free gift of the merciful Father, the forgiveness of sins requires, in order to be offered to sinners, neither sacrificial ordinance

nor expiatory rite. So Jesus, as the Messiah, extends forgiveness to all, without ever making the slightest allusion to the Temple sacrifices, or to the special value which will attach to His suffering and death. Ecclesiastical orthodoxy looks upon the parables of the prodigal son, of the publican and of the Pharisee as doctrinally incomplete. Yet nothing is historically more certain than that these parables contain all that Jesus meant by "His Gospel."

Towards the end of His career, about six months before the catastrophe, Christ looked upon His death as inevitable, and spoke of it to His disciples as necessary (Mark viii. 31, and paral. x. 38–45). But is He here alluding to a metaphysical and, so to speak, intra-divine necessity? Has Jesus the slightest idea that He must die in order to give His Father's justice that penal satisfaction without which the Father would no longer be the Father? Nothing is more foreign from His Gospel than such a thought. He considers death inevitable

historically, on account of the course taken by the drama of His life and work. At first He had hoped to convert the people, and had seriously attempted the task. He discovers, as He proceeds, that the spirit of incredulity is ever growing stronger and more hostile. He looks upon the Baptist's end as a prophecy of His own. He has already, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, read His own fate. His conscience lays upon Him the holy obligation not to abandon His work, and circumstances make Him foresee His defeat and death. Is His death then to precede the establishment of the Kingdom of God? Having consecrated His life to it, He will now give His blood for it. He bows before the mystery of God's ways, and morally sacrifices Himself as all God's servants have done. That in this case there should have been no metaphysical necessity consciously in the mind of Jesus, is proved by His prayer in Gethsemane. Jesus ever felt Himself to be within the contingencies of history, and to the very end He asked if it

were not possible that such a cup of bitterness should pass away from Him.

In another place Jesus alludes to His death and gives the reason for it: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many, δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν" (Mark x. 45 and paral.). These words must not be separated from their context. Δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν is connected with διακονηθῆναι; it is the sequel, the consummation and ultimate issue. To isolate the death from the rest of the life, to distinguish between an active and a passive obedience, is a Scholastic fiction, no less anti-historical than anti-moral. Jesus began to give His life when He entered upon His ministry; He ended giving it on the cross. The external acts are different; the cause which produces them, namely, faith and love, is the same from one end to the other.

As to the other words in the sentence, λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν, they constitute a figure, a kind of shortened parable. Jesus could

only establish the Kingdom of God by destroying that of Satan; He could only save men by delivering them from that slavery to Satan into which they had fallen through their sin. Now a ransom must be paid if a slave is to be redeemed. If, therefore, one is desirous of keeping this metaphor drawn from the demoniacal mythology then universally believed in, one will say that Jesus looked upon the gift of His life as a ransom paid to the devil, in order that the latter might be deprived of many slaves, of whom Christ desired to make so many citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom which He was about to inaugurate on earth. Hence His death is not the cause of the forgiveness of sins, but the means whereby Satan is vanquished and the Kingdom of God actually founded. The idea of an atoning sacrifice, of a ransom paid to God, is entirely foreign to this essentially metaphorical passage.[1]

[1] Elsewhere, instead of the figure of a contract and of a ransom paid to the devil, Jesus uses that of a struggle

Neither is the idea to be found in the words by which Christ instituted the Last Supper. Of the four accounts which have come down to us, the shortest, that of Mark xiv. 23 and 24, which probably emanates from the circle of Peter, is, if not the most authentic, at least the nearest to the source. What did Jesus mean by these words: τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς (καινῆς) διαθήκης? He was clearly thinking of Ex. xxiv. 8–11, where the same expression is found: *damhaberith;* the blood of the covenant was not in the least intended to make atonement for sin, but to seal, according to ancient custom, the conclusion of a treaty or of a contract. We find this custom described in Gen. xv. 9 (*cf.* Ex. xxiv. 8–11). The animal offered as a sacrifice of communion was divided into two

with a giant or strong man who must be overcome in order to be spoiled (Matt. xii. 29; Luke xi. 22, x. 18). He will overcome him, but will first fall beneath his blows. The figure is different, but the ethical fact of love faithful unto death is the same. And that is the all-important matter.

equal parts. The two contracting parties were made to pass between these parts and were sprinkled with blood. And this blood, with the flesh partaken of in common, gave a religious value to the treaty concluded. Hence the expression *ferire fœdus*, which is found in almost all languages. The sacrifice ordained to solemnize the covenant on Sinai, between Yahveh and Israel, has no other meaning. We see Moses dividing the blood of the victims slain into two parts, one being placed upon the altar of Yahveh, the other being used to sprinkle the people. The Epistle to the Hebrews is well acquainted with the origin and meaning of this ceremony (Heb. ix. 18). As God is the initiator of the covenant, the sacrifice offered by the people upon this occasion is intended for a sacrifice of thanksgiving and peace, by which the people manifest their gratitude and joy to God. That is why the ceremony ends with a meal at which the flesh of the sacrifice, joyfully partaken of by all, finally seals the

union of the contracting parties. Now, the coming of the Kingdom of God was looked upon by the prophets and Jesus as a new covenant made between God and the Messianic people. Is it strange, then, that the Lord, when about to die, should have considered Himself the victim whose blood was to seal this covenant, and that, at the last meal, He should have given His flesh as the aliment of the Messianic feast, which was to unite God and His new people for ever? But let us be careful; in this order of ideas there is not the smallest room for the notion of judicial atonement.[1]

V.—Pauline Theory of Redemption

We say "Pauline theory," because with the author of the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Romans we quit the realm of metaphor and popular language and enter the sphere of theology.

[1] We have not examined the words spoken on the cross (Mark. xv. 34 and paral.), because they have no connection whatever with the question we are here discussing.

Paul had not been a disciple of the Pharisees to no purpose; from them he learned the strict conception of penal law, a judicial conception of the divine law. The condemnation inflicted by the law upon sin and the sinner must be borne. This condemnation has fallen upon Christ. He who knew no sin was made to be sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; Rom. iii. 25). "If one died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor. v. 14). Thus Paul's theology positively contains the idea of substitution and exchange between Christ and the sinners whom He saves by His death. He suffers and dies for their sakes and in their stead.

And yet the Pauline theory is none the less very different from the one which will later on hold the field with Saint Anselm—Paul does not endeavour to reconcile God's justice and mercy. Nor has God any need to be reconciled to man. God has of His own good pleasure, *εὐδοκία*, taken the initiative

in the work of reconciliation; God was in Christ and working through Christ to reconcile the world unto Himself. What Paul calls δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ is quite as much a manifestation of grace as of justice. It is justice realized in love which forgives and sacrifices itself (Rom. iii. 26, v. 8, viii. 37 and 39; Eph. i. 6–9, v. i., ii. 4; Gal. iv. 6, κ.τ.λ.). It is by starting from this idea of the grace of God always and everywhere active, and from the Pharisaic notion of law, that Paul constructs his theory of Redemption; thus the latter comes before us as the conciliation, at once skilful and profound, of the two antinomical premisses of his thought.

"The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). "For he that hath died is justified from sin, having paid the penalty" (Rom. vi. 7; *cf.* Rom. vii. 1 and 2). Such is the twofold judicial axiom whence the apostle's reasoning starts. In the matter of punishment it cannot be a mere question of the substitution of an innocent one in the place of the guilty, which

would be violating the law under pretence of satisfying its demands. No, the sinner himself must undergo the penalty of his sin. But how will he be able to undergo the penalty, that is to say, die, and at the same time be saved? This is the miracle which divine grace has successfully accomplished; this it is which rightly constitutes the essence of what Paul terms "the gospel of the cross."

Christ in His love dies for us; but this will avail nothing and produce no result, unless by faith we die in Him and with Him. Atonement is made not only by the blood of Christ, but also by the faith of the sinner: *ὃν προέθετο ὁ Θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι*, Rom. iii. 25. Faith is not only the condition of the subjective efficacy of atonement; it is also the essential means whereby atonement is effected. If Christ by love identifies Himself with guilty humanity, the sinner by faith becomes united with Christ by the likeness of His death; he dies with Him (Rom. vi. 1–10). The faith of

the redeemed is the counterpart of the love of the redeemer. This twofold identification is more than a metaphor; it is the miracle of grace and faith. Hence it follows that the death on Calvary, caused by the sin of all, is repeated in the soul of the sinner, by faith, on account of his own sin. Such is the profound manner in which Paul understood the repentance to which the prophets and Jesus promised the forgiveness of sins. Death with Christ is, for the individual sinner, the way he expiates his sin; that is to say, the way he bears the penalty and consequently is absolved. The great benefit of Christ to sinful men, who repent and believe, is not therefore, as in the theory of Anselm, that He exempts them by dying in their stead, but, on the contrary, that He enables them to die with Him and personally to bear in Him the penalty of their sin. The law which punishes sin by death has therefore produced for them its full effect; the law has exercised its right to the very utmost, but by so doing has become of none

effect, and the sentence of condemnation renders itself void, those who came under it escaping through death, and the law itself ceasing to have dominion over them.

But this is not all. Having died with Christ by faith, the sinner, now a new creature in Him, rises with Him, by faith, to a new life, the life of the Spirit. He is a new creature, in other words, a new creation of that Spirit which raised Christ and raises the dead: *καινὴ κτίσις, ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς, πνεύματος* (2 Cor. v. 17; Rom. vi. 4, vii. 6, viii. 1–10). Hence we see the value and importance of the fact of the resurrection of Christ, in His work of redemption. It was no less necessary than the death itself, for the latter would leave us in death; it is the resurrection that introduces us into life, and, by putting an end to the period of the reign of the law, of sin and of the flesh, inaugurates the period of the Spirit and of eternal life: *ὃς παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν, καὶ ἠγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν* (Rom. iv. 25). It is this aspect

of the redemptive value of the resurrection of Christ that constitutes the originality of the Pauline theory and forbids its being confounded with any other. In reality, the right expression to be used here is not substitution, but mutual identification.

The historical drama of the death and resurrection of Christ is an external drama without value or incomplete, as you will, except in so far as it is morally reproduced by faith in the consciousness of the Christian. Strictly speaking, it is not Christ who expiates the sins of humanity; humanity expiates in Him its own sins, by dying to satisfy the demands of the law, and by rising again, a new creation, at the call of Him who raises the dead.[1]

VI.—The Doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews

When we pass from the Epistles of Paul to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we enter upon

[1] See *Paul: Sketch of Development of his Doctrine*, 3rd edit., 1896. Appendix.

an entirely different order of thought. The central idea of this Epistle is the idea of sacrifice. The whole of Christ's work is summed up in His sacerdotal functions, and these functions are exactly the same as those described in Leviticus. The ritual of Leviticus is, in its view, a preordained and divine code or pattern of man's relations with God, to which the author's thought remains religiously attached and beyond which it does not dream of soaring.[1] The authority of the Mosaic law is beyond dispute, and is for ever binding. The question is not to reform it, but to understand it, and to discover, under the outward forms of the ordinances and beneath the letter, the types of the spiritual and permanent realities of which they are the faithful images.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a disciple of Philo. He thinks and reasons in the Alexandrian categories of the "world of

[1] E. Ménégoz, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, chapter on Sacrifice, 1894.

sense" and the "world of intelligence," the former being the shadow and reproduction of the latter. Hence proceeds a complete method of exegesis. Just as there are two worlds, there are two covenants, two sanctuaries, two altars, two priesthoods, two sacrificial cults, opposed to each other as the heavens to the earth, as eternal types to their shadow or earthly and transient copies. Such is the analogy between the two economies, the Jewish and the Christian: they are absolutely identical, with this difference, that one is only the shadow of the good things of which the other possesses the reality. All is symmetrical and is repeated in both with perfect agreement, with different degrees of efficacy and glory. To the earthly sanctuary, made with hands, corresponds the invisible and heavenly temple; to the high-priest of the family of Aaron, who officiates in the first, the high-priest after the order of Melchizedek, who officiates for ever in the second. So, too, the various kinds of sacrifices of the first covenant,

from the simple offering to the sacrifice for sin, reappear in the new worship, and are offered by the eternal sacrificer in the highest heavens.

The only difference strongly insisted upon by the author of the Epistle is that in the new sacrifice Christ is at once the sacrificer and the victim. He offers His own blood on the heavenly altar for the purification of the people. The following very important fact should be noted: the idea of a chastisement falling by substitution upon Him, the idea of the innocent enduring the sufferings merited by the guilty, is wholly absent from the Epistle, because it is entirely foreign to the Levitical ritual, which the Christian writer adopts and scrupulously follows. Undoubtedly he holds it to be axiomatic that, apart from shedding and sprinkling of blood, there is no remission or valid treaty of alliance. But he does not understand it otherwise than Leviticus itself. Blood possesses this efficacy, not on account of the death or sufferings it may represent, but

because it is the divine means of purification, and because God has ordained that it should be employed for that purpose on the altar. The blood of animals, being carnal, purifies the body and all things from material stains; the blood of Christ, being spiritual, representing the life of the Spirit, purifies the conscience from moral defilement and renders God propitious (Heb. ix. 22, 13 and 14, etc.). We see that the Levitical notion of sacrifice is not, in this Epistle, simply a comparison or literary illustration, but constitutes the essence and defines the very nature of the sacrifice which Christ offers to God, by pouring out His blood in the heavenly temple upon the eternal altar.[1]

The newest feature in the conception of this Epistle, and the most decisive factor for the

[1] It is important to remark that if the Epistle to the Hebrews alludes to the sufferings endured by Christ on earth they are only considered as serving to perfect Him in obedience and holiness, and to make Him feel compassion for our own trials; but they are never taken into account to explain the expiatory virtue of His sacrifice.

future of the doctrine, is the fact that the propitiation of sins is transferred from earth to heaven—"Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, into a greater and more perfect tabernacle," where, as a divine liturge, He lays upon the heavenly altar the holy offering of His body and of the blood that cleanses from all sin (viii. 2; ix. 11, 24, etc.). It is a sort of ideal and divine Mass, if we dare use the expression, which the high-priest after the order of Melchizedek perpetually offers up before God for men. Thus the death of Christ passes out of history and assumes the character of a metaphysical act. At the same time Christ Himself passes out of humanity and, as Philo had already said of the *Logos*, becomes the supreme and eternal sacrificer, ordained by God to offer up for ever, according to an immutable ritual, the worship which the whole creation owes to its author.

We can easily understand how different all this is from Paul's theory. Instead of a

human drama, happening in the very midst of human history and in the conscience of each believer, in order that it may renew by a moral crisis both the individual and humanity, we have here a priestly function, a transcendent act of ritual purification, accomplished outside humanity, and devoid of all organic bond either with its moral condition or with the evolution of its destinies. The astonishing thing is that it should have taken exegesis so long to distinguish between two conceptions which differ so radically.

VII.—The Johannine Doctrine

This doctrine is closely allied to the fundamental conception of the Epistle to the Hebrews. And this is not surprising: it starts from the same Jewish notion of sacrifice and arrives at the same *Logos* doctrine; finally it is developed under the influence of the same Alexandrian theology, with the same antithesis between the world of sense which only possesses the shadow of reality, and the

suprasensible world alone true (ἀληθινός) and eternal.

In the same sense as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author of the First Epistle of John writes that Christ is our propitiation (ἱλασμός) and that His blood *cleanses* from all sin (1 John i. 7, ii. 2, iv. 10). In the Revelation, likewise from the Jewish point of view, mention is made of Him who *washed* us in His blood, and again of the blood of the Lamb that was slain, in which the elect have *washed* their robes (Rev. i. 5, vii. 14, etc.). Here again we must reiterate: the blood purifies and washes, not by the pain and death caused by the fact of being poured out, but by its own inherent virtue, and because God has given it to purify men and things before Him (Lev. xvii. 11, *sqq.*; xiv. 25, 51; xvi. 18–20).

In the Johannine writings there is also a heavenly sanctuary with altars and a sacerdotal worship (Rev. iv.–v.). It is true the epithet "great high-priest" is not given to Christ;

but there can be no doubt as to the priestly function He fulfils before God in the heavenly places. The prayer in chapter xvii. of the Fourth Gospel has been rightly termed "high-priestly." These words, ἁγιάζω ἐμαυτὸν, "I sanctify myself," are to be understood of a sacrifice in which, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is both priest and victim. His function of advocate with the Father is only another aspect and a consequence of His priestly activity (John xvii. 19; 1 John ii. 1).

Needless to say that in all this there is not the slightest trace of the idea of expiation through the equivalency of a sentence endured, nor of judicial substitution of an innocent one for the guilty, nor again of satisfaction given to God's justice. The death of Jesus remains throughout the means, not the cause of redemption, the initiative for which resides solely in the love of the Father. Far from the death of Christ being the cause of the love of God, it was God's love that gave to

the world the gift of the Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 10).

Neither is the idea of atonement in the Scholastic and judicial sense to be found in the assimilation of Christ to the paschal lamb. This rite had no atoning character.[1] The blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doors of the children of Israel was simply a sign for the destroying angel of Yahveh. On the other hand, its flesh served as food, which was eaten by the pilgrims journeying towards the promised land. So too the incarnate *Logos*, after having given His blood as a propitiation, further gives His flesh and blood as food which is to nourish and substantially transform the believer. Beginning with the remission of sins, the redemptive work is crowned by

[1] The following words in the Gospel, ὁ ἀμνὸς, ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου, should be translated "the Lamb which *taketh away* (and not which *beareth*) the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

the indwelling of the *Logos* in those who are joined with Him by faith. This union of the *Logos* with the human soul is a new feature which the Greek Fathers worked out with marked favour, making it the essential and positive factor in the work of Christ: humanity benefits not by the death of Christ, but by His Incarnation.

To sum up. We succeed in clearly distinguishing two currents of thought in the Bible: the one, starting from the Levitical notion of sacrifice and worked out in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the Johannine writings; the other, starting from the prophets' idea of the just suffering on account of the sins and for the sake of His people, and taken up by Jesus and Paul. The first idea is purely ritual; the second is essentially ethical, and is drawn from the lessons of history. Those who, with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, still believe that the worship of God by means of the ritual of material offerings and slain victims is of eternal and divine institution,

may see a like sacrifice in the death of Christ upon the cross. As for those who see in the gifts and victims offered to the Divinity, in order to obtain His favour, nothing but a primitive and rude method corresponding to the infancy of religion, they may still go so far as to say with the Apostle Paul: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Eph. v. 2); they may still repeat with the same Apostle: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Rom. xii. 1). In both cases they will feel that they are only speaking metaphorically, and are borrowing figures from a past order of things, just as poets still occasionally borrow them from mythology and speak of the Muses, of Apollo and his lyre.

SECOND PART

Ecclesiastical Doctrine

I.—The Ideas of the Fathers—Ransom paid to Satan

One thing fills us with astonishment in the history of the first centuries of the Christian Church: while transforming the celebration of the Eucharist into the expiatory sacrifice of the Mass, and thus making the death of Christ the centre of her worship, the Church does not appear to have felt the need of defining the meaning of Atonement in an authoritative doctrine.[1] Every controversy turned upon Christology, which comprised the doctrine of salvation. Everything else appeared of minor importance. The signi-

[1] *Cf.* Note II. p. 140.

ficance and value of the sufferings of Jesus were among the doctrinal questions which might be freely discussed.[1] In the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's death and the forgiveness of sins are mentioned in two separate places, and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed connects man's salvation in a general way with the Incarnation, passion, and resurrection of the God-man.[2] With the exception of a few passages in the epistles of Barnabas, of Clement of Rome, in the Epistle to Diognetus, which suggest now the thoughts and expressions of the Epistle to the Hebrews, now those of Paul,[3] the Apostolic Fathers, and the majority of the Fathers after them, lay even more stress, in the work of Christ, upon the doctrine He revealed and the example He set than upon His sufferings and death.[4] The

[1] *Cf.* Note III. p. 141.

[2] Nic. Constantinop., Τὸν (υἱὸν) . . . . διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα, παθόντα καὶ ἀναστάντα.

[3] Barnabas, Epist. ii.-xiv. ; Clement Rom., Epist. vii xvi., xxi. ; *Ad. Diogn.*, ix.

[4] *Cf.* Note IV. p. 141.

dominant point of view throughout Greek theology is that of a theosophy at once rational and mystical, based on the central doctrine of the Incarnation of the *Logos*. The redemptive work itself proceeds from the fact of the Incarnation. "God became man, that we might become divine like him."[1] Such is the formula then re-echoed on all sides. This divinization of humanity by the union of the *Logos* with a human body carries with it sanctification and the germ of eternal life, both physical and spiritual, for mankind, subject until then to corruption and death. Those who are united to the *Logos* will escape death and rise again.[2] This action of the divine *Logos* on the nature of man is generally compared to that of leaven on dough, in accordance with a figure borrowed from Paul. Through the organic union of Christ with the Church, which is His body, the entire body

[1] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, 54: Αὐτὸς ἐνανθρώπησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν.

[2] *Cf.* Note V. p. 143.

enjoys the privileges of the chief of its members. The sin of Adam had obliterated the divine image which the *Logos* had stamped in human nature; the *Logos*, returning to dwell in humanity, restores this marred image and imparts to it even a greater lustre.[1]

The negative side of Christ's work was not entirely neglected. Athanasius especially recognized that the principal object of the Incarnation of the Son of God was to be found in the necessity of submitting to and consequently of abolishing the sentence of death incurred by all men. "The debt which all owed, he says, must be paid off. All must die! Therefore when He had by miracles proved His divinity, He offered Himself up as a victim on behalf of all, and, in the place of all, gave up to death the temple of His body, in order to set us right and to free us from that old transgression, and also to show Himself stronger than death and to make His own

[1] Gregory of Nyssa, *Orat. catech.*, 32; Athanasius, *De Incarnat. Verbi D.*, 13.

body appear the first-fruits of the resurrection of all."[1]

But if we inquire how the death of Christ brought about the redemption of sinners, we discover that almost all the Fathers looked upon it as a semi-mythological and semi-judicial drama of the strangest kind. The theory of a ransom paid to the devil seems to have been the continuation, within the Church, of Gnostic speculations.[2] This conception pleased the popular fancy; but the more theology pandered to it, the more it was departing from the theory of a sacrifice offered to God. Is it not strange to find that at this time, in the primitive Catholic Church, thought was going in one direction and worship in the other? Had she been consistent, the Church ought to have made of the Mass a sacrifice offered to the devil.

Irenæus seems to have been the first to sketch the theory of a ransom understood in

[1] Athanasius, *De Incarnat. Verbi D.*, 20.
[2] *Cf.* Note VI. p. 143.

this sense. By its first sin humanity fell under the lawful rule of Satan. This rule might have been overcome by the all-powerful God, who might have deprived Satan of his property by an act of sovereign power. But being essentially just, God meant to deal justly even towards the prince of injustice. So He proposed a contract in due form to the devil. He offered him, as a ransom, the soul of His Son in exchange for the souls of men. For this the Son of God must be both man and God: man, because He was to offer a ransom for men; God, in order, after His death, to be able to triumph over Satan and hell. The devil fell into the trap; he accepted the bargain, and released man in order to receive in return the soul of the Son of God. But the devil was not strong enough to keep His soul. The Son of God left hell after having demolished its portals. Nevertheless the contract remained valid. God was not to blame. The arch-deceiver had deceived himself.[1]

[1] *Cf.* Note VII. p. 144.

Almost all the Fathers of the Church, from Irenæus to Gregory the Great, took pleasure in developing and preaching this theory, so that it continued to grow richer in dramatic details, to the confusion of the devil, who now became the personage at once odious and ridiculous of the mediæval Mysteries.[1] "Like a skilful fisherman, God veiled the divine nature of His Son beneath human flesh, in order to catch Satan by the hook of His divinity. The latter, like a greedy fish, swallowed both bait and hook. Thus was fulfilled the word spoken of old by God to Job (xli. 1): Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fish hook? But his greediness proved fatal to himself. As Saturn of yore, he was obliged to give up those whom he had devoured."[2]

Such a theory could not fail to scandalize those of a more refined turn of mind and

[1] Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. catech.*, 22–36. Leo the Great, *Sermo,* xxii. 4. Ambrose, in Evang. Luke, iv: *Oportuit hanc fraudem diabolo fieri.* Augustine, *de liber. arbitrio.,* iii. 10, etc.

[2] *Cf.* Note VIII. p. 145.

whose moral sense was more acute. Not only did the comedy appear unworthy of God, but people could with difficulty admit that God owed anything else to the devil but the punishment of his crimes. Gregory Nazianzus inveighs most strongly against this idea of a ransom paid to the devil. But he is just as loath to admit that there can be any talk of a ransom paid to God. Wherein, he asks, could the blood of His only Son prove acceptable to the Father? But then the theory of a ransom is entirely overthrown by the twofold protest of the Christian consciousness. Gregory Nazianzus, however, still upholds it; but he deprives it of its character of necessity. The ransom was offered to God, not because God required it, but on account of the economy of salvation.[1] When the cause of Christ's death was sought in God Himself, theologians were far from thinking of His justice, as they did later; their sole aim was to safeguard His veracity. In Genesis God had pronounced

[1] Gregory Nazianzus, *Orat.*, xlii.

the sentence of death upon the sinner; He could not depart from His word.[1] Augustine thought that God must needs have both loved and hated us, and that it was this feeling of hatred that had to be removed. On this score God needed to be reconciled with us. Augustine explained this paradox by saying that what God loved in us was His work, and that what He hated was our sin. But such was still the inconsistency of Christian thought on this point that the same Augustine denies any metaphysical necessity to the death of Christ, when he avers that although God chose this method of Redemption, He was perfectly free to have chosen another.[2]

II.—The Theory of Anselm

"Theological thought takes a new direction with Saint Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*, ... as E. Ménégoz very truly says.[3] Stress will

[1] Athanasius, *De Incarnat. Verbi D.*, v. 7 and 9.

[2] *Cf.* Note IX. p. 145.

[3] E. Ménégoz, *The Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 230 and 231.

henceforth be laid on the redemptive value, not of the Incarnation, but of the death of Christ. This change marks a new epoch in the history of dogma. From this time the conception of redemption frees itself from that of the Incarnation. Soteriology becomes a distinct chapter, in dogmatics, next to that of Christology. It was, at the same time, a return to the Biblical conception, for, in the thought of the authors of the New Testament, it was not by His Incarnation but by His death that Christ wrought the redemption of humanity."

It should be added that Anselm's theory, with differences of detail, although it has never been sanctioned as an article of faith by any Church, has none the less become in reality the orthodox doctrine in the Catholic Church as well as in the Protestant Churches. Rejecting the idea of a ransom paid to the devil, Anselm was the first to oppose, within the Godhead, the attributes of justice and of mercy. He constructed in theology a theorem

similar to that of the parallelogram of forces in mechanics, as Strauss ingeniously remarks: divine mercy inclining towards forgiveness and justice calling for inexorable punishment are two equal forces, and the resulting force lies in the diagonal of *vicarious satisfaction.*

The origin of the theory is to be found in the principle of Germanic law, then in full vigour in the feudal world: *Necesse est ut omne peccatum aut pœna aut satisfactio sequatur.*[1] Add to this the idea of honour derived from chivalry. From these Anselm deduces the whole of his doctrine by a concise and almost mathematical method of reasoning. Sin is nothing else but the refusal to render His due to God, the universal Suzerain. Every rational creature owes it to God to bring his own will under subjection to God's will. This is the honour that belongs to God. Whoever rebels against His law robs Him of His honour.[2]

Now, to tolerate that a creature should rob the Creator of the honour that belongs to

[1] *Cur Deus homo,* 1, 14. [2] *Cf.* Note X. (*a*), p. 146.

Him, would be the most intolerable of all injustices; for besides the fact that such tolerance would imperil the very dignity of God, it would introduce in His work a principle of confusion and disorder which would seriously disturb its harmony and mar its beauty. Nothing then could be more just than that God should save His own honour.[1] But there are only two ways in which God can do this. Man must restore to God what he has taken from Him, and even something over and above, on account of the insult, or else God must recover His honour by force: willing reparation or necessary punishment.[2] Man's punishment for sin will consist in *the everlasting torments of hell*, instead of happiness and eternal life.

Man, on the other hand, when once he has fallen into sin, can never again, however great his willingness, give to God a sufficient satisfaction, or indeed any satisfaction at all. For

[1] *Cf.* Note X. (*b*), p. 146.
[2] *Cf.* Note X. (*c*), p. 146.

every moment of his life he owes it to God to perform every good and meritorious action of which he is capable; he can never, therefore, cancel the primitive debt.[1] Nay, more: God's honour is worth more than the whole world; if on one side of a balance we were to place the value of the whole world and on the other the smallest act of disobedience to the will of God, the latter would be of even greater weight.[2] It is therefore quite evident that the finite creature man will never be able of himself to pay to God the infinite debt of his sin.[3]

After having thus rigorously set forth the requirements of God's justice, Anselm reverts to what God's goodness wills. The one is not more immutable than the other. God's goodness cannot abandon the gracious design it had in creating man; it must perfect it. The question then is to reconcile in God these

[1] *Cf.* Note X. (*d*), p. 146.
[2] *Cf.* Note X. (*e*), p. 147.
[3] *Cf.* Note X. (*f*), p. 147.

contrary requirements, and therefore to find a being equal to this task.[1] This being must be greater than all save God. He must therefore be God. On the other hand, a man must pay the debt of mankind. Thus man owes the required satisfaction, and God alone can supply it; it is therefore necessary that God should become man. Such is the answer to the question: *Cur Deus homo.*[2]

If now we ask what must be the satisfaction furnished by the God-man, it is clear that it cannot consist in his active obedience; for, like every creature, he personally and naturally owes such obedience to the commandments of God. But he does not owe it to suffer and to die, seeing he is all-powerful and without sin.[3] If, then, he freely lays down his life, he gives something of infinite value, which is more than sufficient to balance man's debt. He thus earns merit which God cannot fail to reward.

[1] *Cur Deus homo*, ii. 4 and 5.
[2] *Cf.* Note X. (*g*), p. 147.
[3] *Cur Deus homo*, ii. 11.

But the Son, who already possesses everything by right of birth, cannot be personally recompensed. He therefore has over and above a surplus of merit, and the benefit will be carried forward to the account of sinners and for their salvation. They are let off, because their debt is now paid. It is the twofold triumph of God's justice and mercy.[1]

Anselm's theory did not obtain the immediate success one might have expected. The old traditions still ruled over men's minds and governed popular preaching. This lofty but purely rationalistic speculation, this fine Platonic dialectics, elicited more admiration than confidence, even from those who could understand it. Scholasticism had just set in. Abelard was at one with Anselm in denying the rights of the devil and entirely excluding him from the work of Redemption; but he was averse to a construction in which moral realities seemed transformed into geometrical quantities. According to Abelard, Christ by

[1] *Cf.* Note X. (*h*), p. 147.

His death brought about our salvation, not by satisfying God's justice, but by giving us an example of infinite love, and awakening in the souls of sinners a corresponding love which leads them back to God.[1] Saint Bernard accused him of rationalism, and still continued to maintain, in opposition to Abelard, Satan's lasting claims upon his victims.[2] Peter Lombard accumulated and tried to reconcile the most widely divergent opinions.[3] He expresses the view that the death of Jesus was both a ransom paid to the devil and a manifestation of love.

It is only with Saint Thomas Aquinas that the theory of *satisfaction* revives and once more comes upon the scene, though not without important modifications. Henceforth it is no longer founded on Germanic law (compensation for an offence by an offering equiva-

[1] *Cf.* Note XI. p. 148.

[2] *Epist. ad Innoc. II., de erroribus Abœl.*, c. 5: *Discat (Abœlardus) diabolum non solum potestatem sed etiam justam habuisse in homines.*

[3] Peter Lombard, Lib. iii. 19.

lent to the wrong committed), but on Roman law (satisfaction by the legal penalty merited and duly borne). The idea of substitution is more clearly set forth, and thus the doctrine of Aquinas assumes a more pronounced expiatory character than that of Anselm. It was possible for Christ to be substituted for the guilty in the execution of the sentence against sin, because, being united with humanity, He forms, together with men, a kind of unique personality, a mystical body like the head and the members. "In so far as two men through love become one being, the one can offer *satisfaction* in place of the other."[1] On the other hand, Aquinas, who is full of poorly disguised contradictions, leans anew in the direction of Anselm's theory of compensation, by the way in which he considers and applies Christ's merits. The latter even exceed the requirements of the divine law; they therefore remain *supererogatory*, and for the benefit of the Church.[2]

[1] *Cf.* Note XII. (*a*), p. 148.
[2] *Cf.* Note XII. (*b*), p. 148.

But while he was attempting to improve upon Anselm's theory, he was weakening its metaphysical foundation by reducing the necessity of this means of salvation to a purely relative necessity. Indeed, he took up again Augustine's idea that God was absolutely free to choose another plan of Redemption. If the plan He preferred to elect was the gift and death of His Son, it was because of the fitness of this means for the end He had in view.[1] Aquinas was thus affording matter for the criticism of Duns Scotus, who, in the name of the divine prerogative, soon set about depriving the theory of satisfaction of all logical force, and, worse still, of all moral reality. The Franciscan doctor loosens all the bonds, calls in question all the logical or moral necessities which bind up into a homogeneous whole the various parts of Anselm's theory, so that the different fragments only hold together by reason of God's arbitrary will. He denies that it was

[1] *Cf.* Note XII. (*c*), p. 149.

necessary that the human race should be saved; he denies that salvation could only have been brought about by satisfaction; he denies that, in order to furnish this satisfaction, the death of a God-man was necessary; finally, he denies that Christ was able to offer sufficient and superabundant satisfaction. If the passion of Christ brought about salvation, it was not because it possessed any inherent value or virtue, but because it pleased God to accept it as sufficient. Having only suffered as a man and during a very short space of time, Christ was only enabled to acquire a human and finite merit. Besides, Duns Scotus also denies the infinite gravity of man's sin. It is through the martyrdom of the man Jesus that God thought fit to save us, and every man might even *satisfy* for himself, if God were to give him the antecedent grace, as He has already given us before any merit on our part. Is it not strange to see the supernaturalism of the Scholastic doctrine crumbling merely because it is carried to the

extreme, and in the ultimate conclusions of Duns Scotus attaining what will later be Socinian rationalism?[1]

Notwithstanding the opposition of the Franciscan doctors, Anselm's doctrine became firmly implanted in the tradition of the Catholic Church. This should not surprise us, for the doctrine contained numerous elements which were in profound harmony, and suited most admirably the ascetic tendencies of Catholic ethics and the more popular religious practices: 1*st*, the conception of the work of Christ as a *supererogatory* work, that is to say, Christ, the ideal of the monk and of the saint, doing more than God required, and thus gaining merits which may be transferred to others; 2*nd*, sin defined as a debt, and God as a human creditor who pronounces Himself satisfied, however He recovers His money; 3*rd*, divine grace transferred to one sinner or to another, as by a bill of exchange endorsed by the Church; did not all this come as an authoritative and divine

[1] *Cf.* Note XIII. p. 150.

example to justify the theory of the efficacy of masses and the practice of indulgences? It is not astonishing, then, that the Church should have retained a doctrine which procured her so many and so precious advantages.[1]

It is not so easy to understand the even heartier welcome with which it was received by all the Reformers. No doubt they were favourably struck by the fact that Anselm invested man's sin with infinite gravity, and reduced the sinner to a state of absolute insolvency. They did not see that as this seriousness of sin was solely due to the infinite character of the person offended, namely God, it remained external to the conscience of man; that the divine nature had perhaps been offended by sin, but that human nature, while remaining legally responsible, was not therefore more wicked. The Reformers were content to oppose the full sufficiency of the merits of Christ to the ascetic satisfactions and human merits preconized by the Church.[2] They did

[1] *Cf.* Note XIV. p. 151. [2] *Cf.* Note XV. p. 152.

not perceive that these very ideas of *merit* and *satisfaction* placed them, at the very outset, on purely forensic ground, outside the gospel of grace and free pardon which they were desirous of restoring to the world. Luther,[1] indeed, was somewhat doubtful about the term and the idea of *satisfaction*, and Calvin appears to be considerably perplexed before the contradictory ideas of grace and merit.[2] But neither of them was able, in this matter, to overthrow the power of Catholic tradition. The theory of Anselm, or rather that of Thomas Aquinas, found its way into the Confessions of Faith of the two Protestant Churches,[3] and was developed to its extreme and logical limits by the Protestant Scholastics of the seventeenth century. Without hesitation, they extended

[1] *Cf.* Note XVI. p. 152.

[2] Calvin, *Inst. Ch.*, ii. c. 17. One should read the whole of this curious chapter to see how Calvin finally reduces even Christ's merit to the pure and sovereign grace of God. See also iii. c. 15.

[3] *C.A.*, p. 10; *F.C.*, pp. 684–696. *Conf. Helv.*, ii. c. 15. *Conf. Belg.*, art. 20. Calvin, *Inst. Ch.*, ii. c. 16 and 17. *Form. Cons. Helv.*, 15, etc.

this penal satisfaction furnished by Christ even as far as the divine malediction and the torments of hell. Christ endured eternal punishment *non extensive, sed intensive.* It was in Gethsemane, when "the soul of Jesus was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and on the cross, when He uttered that cry of distress, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that these theologians thought the Son had succumbed beneath the weight of the sin of humanity and of the curse of the Father. Thus a so-called equivalence was established between the punishment deserved by men and the punishment suffered by the Redeemer.[1] When a doctrine reaches its extreme form, all the internal contradictions it contains are ready to become manifest. The conclusions of the Protestant dogmatists were logical; but they shocked both the moral consciousness and the reason which they aspired to satisfy. This revolt was immediately embodied in the Socinian and Arminian criticism.

[1] *Cf.* Note XVII. p. 152.

III.—Socinian Criticism—Overthrow of the Judicial Theory of Satisfaction

A. Harnack justly remarks that the criticism of Faustus Socinus is the revival and development of that of Duns Scotus and of his school. Only, being no longer cramped by respect for the authority of the Church, but, on the contrary, finding in the awakening and tendency of modern thought a powerful ally, it was now more radical and soon became irresistible. It has sometimes been said that this criticism was purely negative. This is true; but then there is a time to pull down and a time to build up. The Socinians admirably carried out their work of demolition. They attacked and ruined the theory of Anselm by the help of the same abstract and formal dialectics which had been used to found it. That with such an instrument their work should have remained even with the ground, and should have left the whole problem unsolved, must also be admitted. But they none the less

rendered an invaluable service to the Christian consciousness, not only by setting forth the inner contradictions of the older doctrine, but also by making all feel the inadequacy and radical incompatibility of forensic notions to express the nature of Christ's work. They thus forced Christian thought to abandon once and for all the regions of mythology and of penal law, and to take its stand at last on the firm ground of moral realities. Hence this criticism marks an essential and decisive stage in the evolution of the doctrine, the history of which we are following.

F. Socinus first shows up the contradiction between the idea of *satisfactio* and that of *remissio peccatorum*. Where satisfaction has been made, it is no longer necessary to pardon; where it is necessary to pardon, satisfaction has not been given. A debt is either cancelled or claimed. To say that another pays alters nothing. The debtor is changed, but not the transaction. Release is ensured by right upon payment of the debt; there can no

more be question of a gift. Talk of right or of grace; but do not dimly confuse the two notions, you only succeed in destroying the one by means of the other.[1]

We speak of a debt. But is it the same with moral debts as with sums of money? Can the merit or the punishment of an individual be transferred to another as by a bill of exchange? No; the debt of money is something material and external to man; merit and punishment are strictly personal and inseparable from the subject himself.[2] An innocent man may indeed suffer through an unjust condemnation, but he will never suffer as a criminal. Besides the fact that the transfer of the inner penalty for sin is impossible, it would be sovereignly unjust in God to order it. Strict justice is not satisfied if the innocent suffer; it requires the punishment of the guilty (Deut. xxiv. 16; Ezech. xviii. 20). So with the merits which

[1] *Cf.* Note XVIII. (*a*), p. 153.
[2] *Cf.* Note XVIII. (*b*), p. 153.

Christ is said to have acquired by His active and perfect obedience. Whence should come that superabundance which might be carried forward to another's account? Is there any creature who is not required to obey the will of God, and who, in obeying, does more than his duty.[1]

Finally, there is no real equivalence between what Christ did or suffered and what we deserved to suffer. We had incurred the penalty of eternal death; Christ did not suffer it; on the contrary, His sufferings and death led Him to glory. It is a mistake to hope to compensate what is lacking in the quantity of the suffering by its quality, alleging that Christ was God; for He did not suffer as God but as man; besides, this suffering was never other than personal and finite, therefore far from equivalent to the sum of all the torments deserved by the race. If then it be maintained that God, in His mercy, was content to accept this insufficient

[1] *Cf.* Note XVIII. (*c*), p. 154.

satisfaction, we may well ask why He did not renounce all satisfaction.[1] Granted even that there was in Christ a divine nature capable of investing His passion with infinite value, even then we do not obtain actual satisfaction. For the idea of satisfaction implies not only that the one who furnishes it is different from the one who receives it, but that it is levied on a capital which is not already in the possession of the latter. Now, if God is satisfied with the sufferings and merits of God, He is willingly deceiving Himself, content with the vain satisfaction of paying Himself.[2]

Socinus is less successful in reconstructing a new doctrine than in criticizing the old one. In his opinion the value of Christ's death consists in the power and beauty of the example He gave, and in the confirmation of the truth of His Gospel. It is especially by His resurrection that Christ effects our

[1] *Cf.* Note XVIII. (*d*), p. 154.
[2] *Cf.* Note XVIII. (*e*), p. 154.

salvation, by revealing immortality to us and introducing us into His own joy and glory.[1]

This purely logical criticism, conducted from an ultra-individualistic point of view, failed to go to the bottom of the problem; it had no grasp of the social mystery, of physical and moral solidarity, of sympathy, of all that renders human beings dependent on each other, and, as it were, unifies them. The moral life itself is not so individualistic as the Socinians imagined, and it is indeed true that we bear and ought to bear the burdens and even the faults of others (Gal. vi. 2). But where this criticism was most certainly right, was in its overthrow of the judicial fictions created by the older theory. On this point it has not been refuted, nor indeed could it have been, because it was impossible to reinstate the axioms of the old Germanic or Roman law, such as *compensation* for an offence, or *substitution* of one victim for another. Even the law of nations has become

[1] *Cf.* Note XIX. p. 154.

more moral; to-day we see in these barbarous customs the very opposite to the idea of justice. We can, on this score, estimate the progress made by the *Defence of the Catholic Faith* which Hugh Grotius wrote in answer to the attacks of the Socinians. He did not deny that God had the right and the power to forgive without punishing. But, like a wise monarch who, even while pardoning criminals, owes it to his empire and to the safety of his subjects to execute a few for the sake of example, and in order that the laws may continue to be respected by all, God, while freely forgiving guilty humanity, delivered over to death His innocent Son for a demonstration of justice. In this way there was neither compensation, nor substitution, nor satisfaction of any kind, but only a manifestation determined upon by divine wisdom. But is not this giving up the substance of the old doctrine, in order only to retain the shadow? Besides, what manifestation of justice can there be in the fact of condemning

an innocent one in place of the guilty? In order to uphold the moral government of His creation, has God no other means than the primitive and imperfect expedients resorted to by human legislators in the rudest times?[1]

The Arminians sought a solution midway between the orthodox theory of atonement and the moralism of the Socinians. But, as they denied, with the latter, that God had any need to be satisfied, and that the sufferings of Christ were the equivalent of the total punishment merited by humanity, they necessarily reverted to the Scotist doctrine of *acceptilatio*; that is to say, of a purely arbitrary decision on God's part, declaring Himself satisfied with what is offered Him, simply because such is His good pleasure. In the opinion of Limborch, the death of Christ remained a sacrifice, not indeed an expiatory sacrifice, but an offering of great price freely given and graciously accepted, in the sense of the Epistle to the

[1] Hugh Grotius, *Defensio fidei Cathol. de satisf. Christi adv. F. Socin,* Lugd., Bat., 1617.

Hebrews.[1] But one may well inquire what purpose was served by such a sacrifice, seeing that its necessity and even its utility were both destroyed. And yet it is under this illogical and somewhat discreditable form that the doctrine of the Middle Ages has, to this day, held out in modern orthodoxy. Is it not the proof that this view of the death received from the Socinian criticism a mortal blow from which it will never recover?

The philosophical rationalism of the eighteenth century, by carrying on the analysis of the moral act commenced by the Socinians, brought out still more clearly the insufficiency of the forensic point of view and of judicial terminology in this connection. The Socinians had destroyed the idea of penal *satisfaction*; the rationalist theologians fastened upon the very idea of the *remission* of sins and transformed it. From the legal

[1] Limborch, *Theol. Christ.*, iii. 20–22. This theologian speaks of his own doctrine as the mean between two extremes: *quæ inter duas hasce extremas* (*doctrinas*) *media est.*

point of view, by this expression was understood exemption from the sufferings which constitute the punishment for sin. When the idea of this divine punishment is analyzed, one is able to distinguish between the natural consequences of sin and its supernatural retribution. The first were the disorder of the moral life, uneasiness and inner shame, remorse, and also, in the physical organism, disease, poverty, social scorn, etc. The second consisted in extraordinary misfortunes, without any connection with the fault itself, by which, through supernatural agencies, God smote certain criminals, many examples of which we see in the Old Testament and in the histories of early times, or again in the threatened torments of hell after the final judgment. But the closer one looked into this distinction the more it appeared arbitrary and meaningless. To what purpose such supplementary and supernatural torments? Is God like those earthly princes who, to maintain order within their states, on account

of the inadequacy of the ordinary laws, are constantly obliged to intervene personally in order to re-establish their authority? Ancient legends vanish away before the stern criticism of the documents, and, as for the torments of hell, those who did not deny them looked upon them as the natural result and continuation after death of the organic consequences of sin, so that hell became more and more identified with the state of sin itself, beginning and ending with it. It is clear that from this point of view the forgiveness of sins could only come through the destruction of sin itself, for, otherwise, it would remain a pure fiction.[1]

Here, again, the old forensic point of view was retreating before the moral point of view, and supernatural arbitrariness before the autonomy of the spiritual life. The moral philosophy of Kant completed the emancipa-

[1] For a fuller discussion see Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versoehnung*, p. 508 *et seq.* Wegscheider, *Inst.*, § 140 *et seq.*

tion of the modern consciousness in this matter. Henceforward we must give up seeking in any magical and supernatural virtue, the cause of the saving efficacy of the death of Jesus in securing our pardon; it can only ensure the forgiveness of sins in proportion as it contributes to the destruction of sin itself. It saves us from hell only in so far as it puts an end to the state of sin and makes us enter upon a new life.

IV.—Modern Theories of the Death of Jesus

All the theories which, since then, have been constructed to justify the redemptive efficacy of the Saviour's death have proceeded in the same direction, beginning with that of Schleiermacher. In the opinion of this great theologian we cannot talk either of the expiatory suffering of Christ, causing God to forgive us, or of an active righteousness, the superabundance of which might fill up what is lacking in ours. The redemptive element

is to be found, not in the death of Christ, but in the power and brilliancy of His religious consciousness, to the benefits of which we are admitted through faith, and in which we find peace, joy, and salvation. Christ suffered for us only after the manner in which every man who is involved in an historical drama is called upon to suffer, as a result of human solidarity, from the painful consequences of sins in which he has no personal part. Perfect man, Christ represents and sums up in Himself humanity as a whole, so that, as a matter of fact, if He suffers on account of us and in our place, it is in reality humanity that expiates its sin by and in Him. His death is not the cause of an objective atonement made before God for sin, but the historical means of a subjective atonement which is effected in the human consciousness through faith, by the death of the old man and the birth of the new.[1]

[1] Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube,* ii. §§ 100–105. F. Bonifas, *La doctrine de la Rédemption de Schleiermacher,* 1862.

The same effort towards a moral conception of the work of Christ is seen in Lutheran theology in Hofmann, the professor of Erlangen. The judicial idea of substitutive punishment is replaced by the idea of devotion unto death for our salvation. We may still speak of sacrifice, but only in a metaphorical sense, as in the case of a mother exposing herself to death in order to save her son's life. What Jesus suffered is no more the equivalent compensation of the punishment deserved by us, than His righteousness and goodness are a supplement to what we lack in righteousness. His death cannot be considered apart from His life-work, and from His special mission, which was to manifest both the holiness and the love of God.[1]

Finally, Rothe is not afraid to decide in favour of the moral objections of the Socinians against the old theory. Only, seeking the

[1] Hofmann, *Schutzschriften, eine neue Weise alte Wahreit zu lehren* (4 pamph., 1856–59).

reason why the piety of the Church still adheres to the latter, notwithstanding its irremediable defects, he shows that it resides in the perplexities of the Christian consciousness in face of the holiness and the love of God; he points out that both are strenuously upheld, although they are not successfully reconciled. Christ's death is justified not in that it is the cause, but rather the necessary means of Redemption. By it sin is forgiven because it is virtually destroyed.[1]

In England, during the last century, the same evolution was accomplished, independently and with an original turn, starting from the impulse given by Coleridge to religious and moral ideas. The effort and desire to pass from the judicial to the ethical conception of the work of salvation have, since then, been powerfully manifested in the most active and living section of English theologians. It will suffice to recall here the works and the tendencies represented by the names of Thomas

[1] Rothe, *Dogmatik*, ii. §§ 36–55.

Arnold and Maurice,[1] by the Scotch theologians Erskine[2] and Campbell,[3] and especially by the new and solid preaching of F. Robertson,[4] who, in some respects, may be termed the Vinet of England. Since then it has become a matter of common practice to teach that "eternal life" and "eternal death" are not temporary states and future modes of what will happen after death, but moral and spiritual states, already existing here below and characterised by union with or separation from God; that the content of the Gospel is not the fear of the torments of hell, but the love of God for all men; and that the divine chastisements are essentially educative—that is to say, designed for the destruction of sin and the salvation

[1] F. D. Maurice, *Theological Essays; Doctrine of Sacrifice*, 1854.

[2] Th. Erskine, *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel*, 1828; *The Brazen Serpent, or Life coming through Death*, 1831; *The Doctrine of Election, etc.*, 1837.

[3] J. M. Campbell, *The Nature of Atonement, etc.*, 5th edit., 1878. See, too, the works of A. Bruce, Kingsley, Stanley, etc.

[4] *Cf.* Note XX. p. 155.

of the sinner. The judicial idea of atonement was immediately overthrown. Christ was not, by a legal and supernatural decision on God's part, laden with our sins and substituted as an expiatory victim in the place of humanity; but He united Himself with sinners, and, taking their burden by the power of sympathy and love, He raised them out of the state of condemnation, teaching them to believe in the love of the Father. It is by faith and in faith that redemption is realized, for it is in faith that the alienation or antagonism between man and God ceases and disappears. It matters little that in the case of the majority of English theologians this new tendency is associated with many surviving fragments of the older conception, and that almost all of them endeavour to sew this new cloth on the old coat which is falling to pieces; it is none the less a fact that the old theology is dead, and remains in the tradition of the Church as a survival of an epoch now vanished, whereas the new view—the ethical

conception—alone shows itself to be living and fruitful.[1]

In France and in Switzerland Vinet was, without either knowing or wishing it, but by the irresistible power of his moral conception of Christianity, the potent initiator of a quite similar movement. He did not attack old ideas; but, going deeper, in order to penetrate to the centre of the Christian life and to the marrow of the Gospel, he found that his deep and sincere psychology, and the analysis of the moral accompaniments of salvation, led him far beyond the legal constructions of traditional dogmatics. Towards the end of his life, looking back upon the beliefs of his youth, he was

[1] The *Christian World* published from Nov. 1899 to Feb. 1900 a long series of interviews with theologians of different schools, on the doctrine of Atonement and modern thought. It is a faithful picture of the present attitude of Christian thought in England on this subject. The ethical tendency is there manifested with remarkable force. *Christian Conference Essays,* edited by A. Atkinson, with an Introduction by the Rt. Rev. the Bishop of Hereford, 1900; especially the essay on Atonement, by Prof. G. Henslow.

no longer able to recognize them: "I cannot believe in *substitution*," he writes in 1844, three years before his death. "The transfer of guilt upon the innocent is absolutely contradicted by our ideas of morality."[1] And elsewhere: "It is not merely by the sufferings endured between Gethsemane and Calvary, or by the Passion properly so called, that Jesus saves us, but rather by all the sufferings of His life, which was one long passion. . . . . It is not only by the sufferings of His life, but by His life as a whole. . . . . Christ did not suffer all that a son of man can suffer; hatred, envy, confusion, remorse were absent from His pure soul. The death of the cross was not a punishment endured as such; it was a *self-sacrifice*."[2] At the time of his death Vinet felt himself on the threshold of a revolution, or rather of a reformation in theology, which he felt himself incapable of undertaking, but which he welcomed and justified beforehand as both

[1] A. Vinet, *Letters*, ii. 25.
[2] *Esprit de Vinet*, pp. 45–46, and also 131, 144, 152.

legitimate and necessary: "The Reformation —and this he laid down as a principle—is ever permanent in the Church, even as Christianity. . . . . It is Christianity itself restoring itself by its own inherent strength. So that even to-day, whatever the importance of the sixteenth century, the Reformation is still a thing to be done, a thing ever to be recommenced, and for which Luther and Calvin only prepared a smoother and broader way."[1]

Men of a bolder stamp and better equipped with historical and critical knowledge now came forward to undertake this revolution. In the Strasbourg *Revue de théologie*, Colani, Scherer, Trottet, Réville, and many others showed how the results of Vinet's psychology exploded the old bulwarks of dogmatics. The character of the needed reform became more and more clear: Christian thought must be brought over from the point

[1] Astié, art. "Vinet," in *L'encyclopedie des sciences religieuses*, xii., supplement, p. 1122. Wilfred Monod, *Vinet douteur*, 1900.

of view of law to that of the conscience, it must be raised from legality to morality.[1]

Those even who wished to adhere as far as possible to the tradition of the past, tried to find a new foundation for the doctrine of *substitution* in the moral fact of solidarity. They gave up justifying the expiatory condemnation of Christ on the plea that divine justice must be satisfied; they were content to insist upon the organic bond which united the Son of man with the whole race. This method of argumentation, the first sketch of which was given by Ch. Secrétan, and which was powerfully developed by so many orators, among whom should be mentioned E. Bersier, Ed. de Pressensé, and Ch. Bois, has the advantage of being modern; but it remains to be seen whether, from a logical point of view, the argument does not ruin the ancient edifice it was destined to support.

[1] *Revue de théologie de Strasbourg*, vols. iv., v., vi., xiv., etc. Astié, *The Religion of Redemption. Revue Chrétienne*, vol. xiv. *Contemporary German Theology*, 1875. *Miscellaneous Studies in Theology and Philosophy*, 1878.

It is true that those who have laid the greatest stress upon it have never developed with the slightest consistency its most obvious consequences. From the purely historical and psychological point of view of solidarity, they unconsciously pass on to embrace the essentially supernaturalistic and metaphysical formula of legal expiation. The very opposite conclusion would be reached if theologians were content to apply themselves to the order and analysis of the moral facts of salvation; they would see that sin finds its natural punishment in its guilt and consequences, without the intervention of any further and supernatural judicial sentence on the part of God; and that eternal life proceeds naturally and organically from justification and regeneration, even as a beautiful flower rises organically out of an obscure germ, without any special decision on God's part being required. The law of solidarity well explains how and why Jesus suffers in consequence of sins He Himself has not committed; but, then, the con-

sequences are historical and natural. Jesus suffers more and better, but he does not suffer differently from Socrates, martyrs, sages, and, in a word, all good people involved by circumstances in the dramas caused here below by the crimes of the wicked. There is no more need to talk about a special and supernatural condemnation inflicted on the cross upon Jesus. In other words, unless we are willing to remain content with mere phrases, the explanation of the sufferings of Christ by means of solidarity does not carry us beyond Schleiermacher's theory of Redemption.[1]

On the right and on the left of this central theological evolution, two currents of thought could, as usual, be felt, which branched off into the opposite extremes. Pietist sects gave the old doctrine a sensual and mystical character

[1] Ch. Secrétan, *Philosophy of Liberty*, vol. ii., 3rd edit., 1879. *Search after a Method*, 1857, *passim*. Ed. de Pressensé, *The Redeemer*, 1859. F. Monnier, *Essay on Redemption*, 1857. E. Bersier, *Solidarity*, 1869. Ch. Bois, *Revue de théologie de Strasbourg, Du péché*, 1857. *Revue théologique de Montauban.*

which it did not at first possess. Protestantism thus offered a sorry counterpart to the cultus of the Sacred-Heart invented by Marie Alacoque. In these conventicles, and in the literature which proceeded from them, people talked of nothing but blood, wounds, prints of nails, lamb slain, and cadaverous odours. This kind of preaching and theology of blood, indulged in nowadays by the Salvation Army, is nothing but a morbid superstition. Protestantism should leave it to the Church of Rome, which cannot now do without Lourdes and the Sacred-Heart. The Socinians and the older Rationalists have also their descendants. They reduce salvation to moral improvement, and it is impossible to see wherein they differ from an ordinary School of Philosophy. At all events they serve to state the problem clearly and to point out exactly where the difficulty lies. Doubtless, the destruction of sin within us by means of perfect sanctification would bring about complete freedom and salvation. But alas!

this progressive sanctification is condemned to certain failure unless our old consciousness of sin is first destroyed before God. Remorse, that moral disease, is what makes us irremediably weak and sinful. We are therefore in a circle: in order to enjoy full communion with God, or to be saved, we must attain full justice; but in order to attain justice, nay, even to walk in it, we must already be in peaceful communion with God and know that we are pardoned and saved. But this is not all. In arguing thus we were still on legal ground. Now, it is impossible for man to be saved and to reach the full and free expansion of his being under the rule of the religion of the law, even of the moral law. The Gospel is not a mere supplement to the law; it is a religion of a different order. It begins by the preaching of the forgiveness of sins, in order to raise the conscience of man to the religion of grace, which not only sets it free, but also becomes the inner principle of a superior morality created by love, in opposition to a

morality produced by law. Christ gave His blood to seal this new covenant between man and the Almighty, and it is from this point of view that His death can and must be understood in intimate connection with the preaching of the forgiveness of sins.

It is easy to sum up this long historical sketch; it is divided into three successive periods, which represent three different conceptions of the work of salvation. The first, that of the Fathers of the Church, is ruled by the mythological notion of a ransom paid by God to Satan. Although this idea is connected with the Biblical metaphor of redemption and ransom, it is none the less the product of mythological habits of thought, which still survived under the new dispensation, enslaving the imagination of the early Christians. The second period, which extends from the first beginnings of Scholasticism to the end of the seventeenth century, is ruled by the judicial conception of an objective satisfaction made to God, after the likeness of a debt paid to

a creditor or of a substitutive punishment approved by the judge. This conception has its root in the Biblical metaphor of a debt or a chastisement owed by the sinner. But it none the less appears as the consequence, in mediæval theology, of the legal ideas of Pharisaism and of its code of justice based upon retaliation. Finally, the third or modern period is characterized by the effort of Christian thought to grasp and interpret religious salvation as an essentially moral fact, which takes place, not in Heaven, but in the conscience. To rise from Pagan to Jewish conceptions, and from the legalism of the latter to the religion of love, to pass from the judicial to the purely moral point of view, such is its significance and the direction in which it bids us proceed.

CONCLUSION

I

In order to accomplish the task which devolves to-day upon Christian thinkers, it is necessary once and for all to free the old dogma from the absolute notions which constituted its first environment, and in which it has ever since remained enveloped. These notions, corresponding to a lower stage of religious consciousness, are no longer suited to explain and translate the experiences and revelations of the Christian consciousness. They are rude mirrors in which superior realities become distorted. The death of Christ is an essentially moral act, the significance and value of which proceed solely from the spiritual life and the feeling of love which

it reveals. It has long enough been enclosed in the old and primitive categories of ritual sacrifice and penal satisfaction. The time has come to cast off these time-worn trappings and to consider the death of Christ in itself, starting from the moral sentiment which inspired it.

For example, do the ideas of *merit* and of *satisfaction* suit the essentially different principle of the religion of grace and of redemption by love? Are we not at once guilty of the grossest error when we speak of the *merits* which Christ obtained before God, and which can be transferred to us from without? Is not this very idea of *merit* in reality contrary to the Gospel? Would it not have wounded the filial consciousness of Jesus? If we attempt to construct a Christian doctrine out of it, does it not fatally bring us back to the religion of the law? (Rom. iv. 1–4). And is it not a very remarkable thing that the words "the merits of Christ" were never uttered or written by the authors of the New Testament?

The same may be said of the idea of *satisfaction*. The word is found for the first time in Tertullian, and is applied to works of penance, not to the work of Christ. It has no equivalent in Greek, nor do we meet with the idea which it expresses in the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Still less is it to be found in the New Testament, and we have but to compare it with the piety manifested by Jesus towards the Father in order to perceive at once how opposed the one is to the other. "You must punish" in any and every case: such is the tenor of the Jewish and Roman law. Forgiveness for the sinner who repents from the bottom of his heart: such is the message of the Gospel. What constitutes the superiority of the Christian conception of the Father is precisely that it rises above the feeling of retaliation and vengeance, and that it wills not the death of the sinner, but his conversion and life. What *satisfaction* does the Father in the parable require in order to forgive his repentant son who returns to him?

The notions of *sacrifice*, *oblation*, propitiation, and *expiation* come from creeds anterior to Christianity; and unless we admit, with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that these elementary and somewhat anthropomorphic forms of worship were of divine institution, we cannot possibly compare, otherwise than metaphorically, the death of Christ on the cross with the rite of the victim sacrificed and burnt on the altar.

In order to realize on Calvary the idea of primitive sacrifice, we must turn the cross into an altar, Christ's murderers into sacrificing priests, or else we must say that Jesus was both the priest and the victim; even then the harmony and similarity remain imperfect, for Jesus does not nail Himself to the cross. Doubtless, we may, from a literary point of view, take pleasure in an ingenious parallel of this kind; but, in working it out, we shall never, like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, be constructing anything but an allegory, in which words will remain on one

side and the true reality of things on the other.

But we must notice a further and essential difference between the death of Christ and the sacrifice of the altar. In the latter the consent of the victim was not asked; it resisted under the sacrificial knife. It was the odour of its blood and the smoke from its flesh burning upon the altar which, rising up to the nostrils of Yahveh, appeased his anger, by reason of the agreeable sensation it procured him. What constitutes the moral and religious value of Christ's death? Is it not much rather the love that filled His soul, His perfect submission to the will of the Father, the gift of His life to the cause of the Gospel He had preached and of the Kingdom of God or new alliance He had founded? If you deprive the death of Jesus of this moral element, of this personal self-devotion which was absent from the old sacrifices, wherein, I ask, does the suffering of the Holy and Righteous One differ from ordinary suffering? The assimilation, then, of

His death to the ritual sacrifices of ancient religions, far from enhancing, actually lowers it, and indeed overlooks its one element of importance, the very one which invests it with so pathetic and touching a character.

Being an act of absolute self-sacrifice, Christ's death does not belong to the order of ritual sacrifices, but to an infinitely higher order, namely, the moral order. Socrates refuses to quit his prison and to make his escape, out of respect to the laws of his country. Winkelried sacrifices himself at Sempach and seizes with open arms the lances of the Austrians, in order to open a way for his companions. By his death the Knight of Assas gives victory to his country. And history speaks of the *sacrifice* of these heroes. But who fails to see that the word has taken on a moral sense, and that it has become a metaphor which all employ, but which misleads none? Nor must we be misled by the word when we speak of Christ's sacrifice. We deceive ourselves in the most naive manner if we

reduce the word to its primitive sense of a religious rite, and if, from this old notion, we draw, by purely formal logical deduction, a metaphysical doctrine of the Saviour's death. The languages we use are such that they are full of traditional expressions, the early meaning of which has disappeared, and which only live on as poetic and popular images; as for example: the arch of Heaven, the race of Phœbus through the stars. Everyone knows what natural phenomenon is thus designated by poets. So, too, when we celebrate the holy oblation of an agreeable savour offered to God on the cross, we should be faithless Christians indeed if we failed to apprehend at once the moral act which constitutes the value of Jesus' death, forgetting or misunderstanding its nature.

We are no longer in the lower order of sacerdotal ritual; we are in the holiest realities of the moral life.

The same must be said of the idea of a *ransom*, and of the metaphor which it still

furnishes in religious phraseology. Of course it will always be possible to say that Leonidas or Winkelried by their death paid the "ransom" for the independence of Greece or of the Swiss Cantons. It is likewise lawful to say that Jesus paid the "ransom" for the sinner who, through communion with Him, in His life and in His death, has found the assurance of the pardon of his sins, and of his reconciliation to God. But to stop at this idea of a ransom, at the contract it implies, and at the anthropomorphism from which it cannot free itself, and then, starting from this thought, to speculate, with the aid of innumerable purely verbal syllogisms, with a view to deciding whether the ransom was paid to God, who had no need of it, or to the devil, who had no right to it, is to doom ourselves to an absurd position, and, in addition, to deal a mortal blow at the very principle of the Christian consciousness. And to say that traditional dogmatics have been built up almost entirely by this method, working

upon antique and rudimentary notions, and transforming metaphors into dogmatic formulas, in order to translate the purest experiences of Christian piety! After having thus expressed for centuries the Christian faith in a mythological or catholic manner, has not the time now at last arrived to express the Evangelical realities in an Evangelical way?

II

The gravest consequence of the old judicial and legal point of view was that it introduced an irreducible dualism into the Christian conception of God; that is to say, that it destroyed the conception of the Father revealed by Jesus. In fact, men have imagined an internal conflict between His justice and His mercy, so that He was not able to exercise the one without offending the other. Christ, instead of being the Saviour of men, became an intra-divine mediator whose essential office it was to reconcile the hostile attributes within the Godhead, and to ensure peace and

unity within God Himself. This was termed high metaphysics; it was pure mythology.

Hence our work of dogmatic restoration must commence with the reinstatement of the idea of God the Father. God has no need to be reconciled with Himself; He has no need of a mediator within Himself, for He is one; He is one in the punishment of sin and in the salvation of sinners. Paul expressly says, Gal. iii. 20: ὁ δὲ μεσίτης ἑνὸς οὐκ ἔστιν, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς εἷς ἔστιν. This comes out even more clearly in the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Father is perfect, and His perfection lies in the fact that His goodness is just and His justice good (Matt. v. 44–48). That conception of justice is an inferior one which demands punishment for the sake of punishment and merely to inflict pain. True and divine justice seeks the triumph of good over evil, and hence identifies itself of necessity with love, which also gives and imparts itself, pursuing the same end. Love is also holy, for its ultimate desire is

to deliver us from evil. In the religious consciousness of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins and the destruction of sin are inseparable and morally determine each other, the one remaining illusory or vain without the other. Hence the will to redeem is one in the Father, His love for sinners working for the universal triumph of His justice, and His justice only manifesting itself in order to realize His purpose of love. And that is why God needs neither mediation nor satisfaction. The Father is satisfied if the prodigal son, confessing his sins and condemning his errors, earnestly repents and returns to his Father's house. From one end of the Gospel to the other, forgiveness of sins is promised simply to repentance and faith, because, in the inner life of the soul, repentance and faith are in reality the beginning of the defeat and destruction of sin.

The Apostle Paul, starting from the legalism of the Pharisees, seems to dwell upon the antithesis between the wrath of God, ὀργὴ

Θεοῦ, and the grace of God, χάρις Θεοῦ. But it is only a starting-point. The two notions are reconciled in the higher conception of the δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, which was manifested in Jesus Christ, and is imparted, through faith, to all believers; the righteousness of God which is not only punitive, but also justifying, not only negative by the punishment inflicted, but also positive by the justification wrought, and alone really worthy of Him who wills to manifest His righteousness by justifying and saving the sinner: εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως, (Rom. iii. 21–27). We know, further, that Paul reduces the whole plan of salvation to the good pleasure of God, εὐδοκία, which is determined by nothing but itself, and which determines all things (Eph. i. 5; Phil. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 28). In this connection it would be absurd to speak of internal mediation within the Godhead, or of external satisfaction which must be given Him before His free good pleasure can be brought to act. For Paul, as for

John, the coming of Jesus into the world and His death are not the cause but the result and manifestation of divine mercy (John iii. 16). Any other view would be contrary to the very nature of the Apostolic Gospel.

With this Christian idea of the God-Father, with this union or moral penetration of justice and love, of saving justice and sanctifying love, the preaching of the prophets, of Christ, and the Apostles is in entire harmony, for they preach the good news of the forgiveness of sins proceeding solely from the mercy of God, and offered unconditionally in answer to the repentance and return of the sinner. They are unanimous in their preaching. The prophets deny that sins can be forgiven and blotted out by means of sacrifices, fastings, and ritual observances; on the other hand, they promise it to the contrite heart, to the converted will, to repentance and trust in the sovereign grace of God (Hosea v. 15–vi. 6; Amos v. 21–24; Isaiah i. 10–19, lv. 6–13, lix. 20; Jer. iii. 12–14; Ezech. xviii. 21–24). "I have

no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should return, be converted, and live" (Micah vi. 6–7; Ps. li., xxxii. 3–6). "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old. . . . . I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. . . . . And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." But what is the use of accumulating texts? Is it not the very essence of the preaching of the prophets and the foundation of the piety and hope of the devout Israelite? John the Baptist takes up the message of the prophets, and to repentance and conversion adds the forgiveness of sins (Mark i. 4; Matt. iii. 2). To the preaching of repentance Jesus adds the Gospel, the content of which He sums up in the parables of the prodigal son and of the publican. Did He ever connect the forgiveness of sins with anything but the infinite mercy of the Father? Nor did the Apostles teach otherwise (Acts ii. 37–39, and especially iii. 19, v. 31, xvii. 30, xxvi. 20; 1 John i. 9; James iv. 6–11). "Draw nigh to God,

and he will draw nigh to you," etc. Of course, repentance is not the cause of the forgiveness of sins; this cause is none other than the love of the Father for His children; but repentance is the necessary and sufficient condition. Without repentance the forgiveness of sins is an empty declaration, a *flatus vocis*; with it pardon is realized in the heart through confidence in God, for it is impossible to conceive God the Father rejecting one of His children who returns to Him, condemning himself, deploring his sins, and craving forgiveness.

But one must not allege in this connection the necessity of any expiation other than that of the repentance of the heart. One would thus be asking for something lower, not higher. Earthly judges and laws may rest content with a sterile expiation by means of the punishment which secures the death of the guilty without his heart being softened or his will brought into subjection. In fact, it is the law that is thus defeated by the evil it would punish; it is justice that is foiled through the resistance of

the criminal. God's justice aims higher and further; it aims at overcoming evil by good; and how far more truly *satisfied* is it not when the heart of the wicked man is softened, when he condemns himself, when he weeps over his own sins, and, falling on his knees, cries: "Father, be merciful to me a sinner"? Shall we be so blind as not to see how morally higher and more precious the Biblical doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is than powerless ritual expiations and vain judicial satisfactions?

In order to accomplish the work of the salvation of sinners, Jesus then had no need to influence God, whose love had taken and for ever retained the initiative of forgiveness. God has no need to be brought back to man and reconciled with him; but it is man who needs to be reconciled to God. And in this respect the work to be accomplished remains none the less an immense and necessary one.

Since the forgiveness of sins can only be obtained by those who have wandered far from God, repenting and turning towards

Him, Christ's work will consist in bringing about in the individual and in humanity this state of repentance in which alone the forgiveness of the Father can become effective. To all His renouncements and to all the efforts of His holy life Jesus added His sufferings and death, in order to manifest still further His love and devotion, and by His self-sacrificing love to reach at last those hearts which still remained untouched by His kindness, and in order to conquer those whose minds had not yet been won over to His teaching. His death was not an incident differing from the rest of His life; it was the consummation. Picture to yourself a mother whose son goes astray and loses himself in every form of disorder and disease. She goes in search of him, watches by his bedside in the hospital, endures the insults and jeers of insolent servants, and runs the greatest dangers; but she loves and means to save her child. In truth, I tell you that the time will come when her son, whom no exhortation could

restrain and no reproaches bring back to his home, will feel his heart melt at the sight of the sufferings, humiliation, and love of his mother; his eyes will fill with tears, and he will crave and obtain his pardon; he will be saved. What has his mother's devotion accomplished? it has called forth repentance in the heart of her son. And who does not see that this repentance is salvation itself?

Thus it is that the passion and death of Christ act upon the hearts of sinners. His was the most powerful call to repentance that humanity has ever heard, and also the most operative and fruitful in marvellous results. The cross is the expiation for sins only because it is the cause of repentance to which remission is promised. The more I have considered the matter, the more strongly the following conviction has become anchored within me: in the moral world, and before the God presented to us in the Gospel, there is no atonement other than repentance—that is, the inner drama of the conscience in which

man dies to sin and rises again to the life of righteousness. There is nothing grander or better, for repentance is the destruction of sin and the salvation of the sinner; it is the actual realization of the divine purpose within us.[1]

But it is quite evident that Jesus can only be the mediator of our repentance if His sufferings and death touch our hearts, and if we do not consider them as far-off and indifferent events. We were speaking above of the influence of a mother's sufferings upon the heart of her son. If the latter is touched, it is because the woman who is suffering for him is his mother. So, too, between Christ and us a bond must be established, a moral relationship must be formed, which shall bring Him near to us and make Him our brother. This relationship establishes itself on both sides: on the side of Jesus, by His love for His unhappy and lost brethren, for all those who sin, suffer, and degrade themselves here below, but whom He so loves that He is

[1] *Cf.* Note XXI. p. 156.

willing to partake of their lot and share in their shame, misery, and death. On man's side the relationship is established by trust, and the sovereign attraction of the person and message of Jesus. The energy of His religious and moral consciousness awakens our own. Near Him we feel happy and troubled. As He reveals to us the love of the Father, He makes us more conscious of the heinousness of our faults. Then, when we follow Him with the affection of disciples won over but trembling, when we see Him affronting the last struggle of life, in order that He may not betray the Gospel of grace which He was bringing us from the Father, sealing with His blood the Kingdom of God which He intended to found, accepting everything, even till the last moment of the agony on the cross, in filial obedience to God, in devotion and infinite love for humanity: in that hour we fully participate in His sufferings, by the faith that unites us with Him; we pronounce upon ourselves the sentence of death which

fell upon Him. We perceive the love of the Father in all its power, and the sin of man, our own sin, in all its horror. Morally we die with Him, says the Apostle; and if death is the expiation of our sins, this expiation is completed within us at the foot of the cross. But what is this mystical death, save full and perfect repentance?

III

As soon as the drama of Calvary is thus reduced to its true proportions, it becomes what it really was, a human historic drama, the grandest and most tragic in history. All the magic of a sacerdotal rite, all judicial fictions, vanish away; we are once more among the realities of the moral life.

Whatever the grandeur and sublimity of this drama, it was not an isolated one. Although it remains incomparable, and unique by reason of the elevation of the soul that suffered, of the religious consciousness that struggled, and of the absolute self-denial and self-sacrifice, it

is none the less a human one; it takes its place among all the successive acts of abnegation and all the martyrdoms inspired by the same feeling and tending towards the same object. An act of free love, the death of Jesus follows the law which, in the moral realm, demands the sacrifice of love as the condition of salvation and moral restoration. In fact, it is a universal law that ordains that we should bear one another's burdens, that the strong should carry the heaviest burden, in order that the weak should not be weighed down beneath theirs; it is a law of the universe of spirits in their earthly probation that those who love suffer on account of their love; that to devote oneself to the wretched means perforce taking a part of their load upon one's own shoulders. There is not a single victory of good but demands its victims, nor a single progress but the ransom must be paid for it. The work of Christ ceases, then, to be isolated and incomprehensible; it falls within the law which, more than anything else in the world, it con-

tributed to reveal and to stamp deep down in the consciousness of mankind. His was the most fruitful of all sacrifices, because His love was the most intense and His self-renunciation the most complete, whereas, even in the best of men, this brotherly love and devotion are but partial and full of limitations. In death as in life, the Son of man remains the Incomparable One among the children of men.

But He is no longer alone, and, above all, He did not wish to remain alone. The first thing He would have His disciples do, is to learn of Him to love, serve, and give their life as He did. "If any man would come after me," He said, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me"[1] (Mark viii. 34, x. 35–45). In the mind of Jesus, the cross is not a particular misfortune, but the measure of suffering implied in every act of love and self-denial; this is the sense in which it is the very instrument of redemption; Jesus carried

[1] "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 38).

His cross, and those who follow Him must imitate Him, and in like manner carry a cross for the salvation of the world. The Apostle Paul did not hesitate to take up the same thought and to express it in such a way as to scandalize all future orthodoxies: "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, ὑπὲρ υμῶν; and *fill up* on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church" (Col. i. 24). Thus Paul looks upon his own sufferings, because they are of the same nature, as continuing and filling up the atoning sufferings of Christ.

The sufferings and death of the righteous and of the good operate in the same way as the passion of Christ upon the consciences of the wicked; by them they are troubled and inclined towards repentance; which signifies that they help to produce that state of repentance in which the forgiveness of sins and the work of salvation devised by the divine mercy may be realized. The plan of this work which has been proceeding since the

beginning of the world, and which has its centre and culmination in the death on Calvary, is as simple as it is wonderful. God calls all His children to collaborate in this work of mercy and restoration by exercising compassion; self-sacrifice is the unique but all-powerful lever which, renewing the human soul, draws it out of its selfishness and makes it know and taste a higher life.

And do we not, from this point of view, at once truly human and divine, gain a juster, more living, and luminous idea of Christianity, as the religion of universal redemption by love? Christ did not come to perform a particular sacrificial rite. His is no supernatural worship, no abstruse dogmatics, not even the preaching of good tidings, and nothing further. His religion is not a religion of formulas, words, and pious talk.

Merely to repeat His words is not to continue His work; we must reproduce His life, passion, and death. He desires to live again in each one of His disciples in order that He

may continue to suffer, to bestow Himself, and to labour in and through them towards the redemption of humanity, until all prodigal and lost children be found and brought back to their Father's house. Thus it is that, instead of being removed far from human history, the life and death of Christ once more take their place in history, setting forth the law that governs it, and, by ceaselessly increasing the power of redemptive sacrifice, transform and govern it, and direct it towards its divine end.

Such are the authentic data of the Christian consciousness; they are sufficient for the instruction and building up of practical piety. But if the philosophic mind would go farther still and ask whence proceeds this supreme law of the moral world which has made self-denial, disinterested self-sacrifice, and brotherly love the ransom of sin and the means of its progressive destruction, we may well be led to confess our inability to answer. The origins of all things are shrouded in mystery.

Why does life develop by slow evolution, in obedience to the laws which science is little by little ascertaining? Why does anything exist at all? *Ignoramus.* For my part, I stop at the point where the solid ground of experience slips from under my feet, and I re-echo the words of Jesus Himself, "Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight." It is good, indeed, because love is not only the bond that unites souls, but is also their very life, and because self-sacrifice is not less profitable to those who exercise it than to those whom it is designed to benefit; for by self-sacrifice both rise in the scale of the eternal life of the soul.

But I willingly admit that this answer of piety is an act of adoration and not a solution. It is doubtless rash to attempt to infer the constitutive laws of the universe from our purely subjective moral experience, still so imperfect and rudimentary. A sober critical theory of religious knowledge bids us be humble, moderate, and distrustful of ourselves,

because it makes us feel and touch the impassable limits within which our thoughts move. Our ideas of God, of His creative activity and of His purposes, are miserably anthropomorphic; as soon as we press them closely and logically they become contradictory. God's ways are not our ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts. In the presence of the mystery of His essence and of His creation, the speculations of the wise are as quickly and entirely confounded as the imaginings of the lowly. To both the privilege of faith alone remains: to contemplate and follow His revelation in the history of His works, and to listen with piety to His voice in our hearts.

NOTES

I. Isaiah liii. In order to understand the meaning and to see the exact bearing of this famous passage, one must throw off dogmatic preconceptions. Historical exegesis establishes the following facts:—

1*st*. We are here dealing with a poetical passage, the metaphors of which must be interpreted in accordance with the mind of the author and the spirit of the time, like those of Oriental poetry in general;

2*nd*. The "Servant of the Lord" is no future and mysterious personality. The author has himself defined and introduced him in the preceding chapters as the poetical personification, now of the nation of Israel as a whole, now of the faithful remnant of

the people (xli. 8 and 9; xlii. 1; xliv. 1 and 2, 21; xlv. 4; xlviii. 20; xlix. 3 and 5; lii. 13);

3rd. The writer is not thinking of a drama to come, but of a past drama. The only thing the prophet sees in the future is the glorification of his hero; but his humiliation, defeat, and sufferings are in the past.

By the light of these literary considerations, the entire allegory—for it is nothing more—explains itself. What is thought of is the miserable state of the faithful, of the "Lord's poor," who have been involved in the catastrophe in which the whole nation has perished. They, indeed, had done nothing to call down this terrible disaster which had cast them captive and dying on the banks of the Euphrates. Upon them has weighed the iniquity of the people; upon them the judgment of God has fallen. They have died in the land of the wicked, and their death has been as a holy oblation to God for their people. But this is only a metaphor.

Divine grace will restore this defeated and destroyed people; and they shall be the cause of this restoration, because their faithfulness has caused Jahveh to be mindful of the promises of the early covenant made with the entire nation. It is in this sense that the Servant of the Lord shall see his seed, shall justify many by bringing them to repentance, and shall become the nucleus of a glorious national restoration. We do not for a moment go beyond the history of Israel, as the prophets saw it.

We are far beyond and above the priestly ceremonies. In Leviticus we find real sacrifices, but no idea of substitutive atonement. In the second Isaiah we read of a metaphorical and poetical substitution, but the idea of sacrifice is absent. When we bring these books together, in our attempt to explain the one by the other, we perforce disfigure them.

II. A curious fact, and one which, in our mind, has not yet received a satisfactory

explanation, is the absence of any allusion to the death of Christ, and of any connection between His death and the Eucharist, in the oldest Christian liturgy which we possess—the Didache of the Twelve Apostles, chs. ix. and x. At all events, it shows that at first the Eucharist was really a meal, the feast of the Lord, δεῖπνον τοῦ κυρίου, with thanksgiving for the material and spiritual food given to men by the Heavenly Father, and not in the least a sacrificial rite. It was only later and by slow degrees that the family table was changed into an altar, and the broken bread into a host or victim.

III. Gregory Nazianzus, *Orat.*, 43, par. 27: Φιλοσόφει μοι περὶ κόσμου καὶ κόσμων, περὶ ὕλης, περὶ ψυχῆς; . . . . περὶ ἀναστάσεως, κρίσεως, ἀνταποδόσεως, χριστοῦ παθημάτων ἐν τούτοις γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐπιτυρχάνειν οὐκ ἄχρηστον καὶ τὸ διαμαρτάνειν ἀκίνδυνον. *Cf.* Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i. 10, 3; Origen, *De Princ.*, præf., C. 1.

IV. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, ii. 14, 7: *Utrum ne hi omnes (Philosophi) cognoverunt*

veritatem aut non cognoverunt? Et si quidem cognoverunt, superflua est Salvatoris in hunc mundum descensio. LACTANTIUS, *Instit. Div.*, iv. 26: *Deus cum statuisset hominem liberare, magistrum virtutis legavit in terram, qui et præceptis salutaribus formaret homines ad innocentiam et operibus factisque præsentibus justitiæ viam panderet, qua gradiens homo et doctorem suum sequens ad vitam æternam perveniret. Is igitur corporatus est et veste carnis indutus ut, homini, ad quem docendum venerat, virtutis et exempla et incitamenta præberet. Sed cum in omnibus vitæ officiis justitiæ specimen præbuisset, ut doloris quoque patientiam mortisque contemptum, quibus perfecta et consummata fit virtus, traderet homini, venit in manus impiæ nationis . . . . mortem suscipere non recusavit, ut homo, illo duce, subactum et catenatam mortem cum suis terroribus triumpharet.* Such passages, more numerous in the Fathers than one would think, show what rationalism could then be found beneath the most supra-naturalistic

form of metaphysics. The supernaturalism of the Fathers is only a relic of their essentially mythological way of thinking, as will appear from their theory of a ransom paid to Satan by God Himself.

V. Athanasius, *De Incarnat. Verbi D.*, 9: Ἡ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ φθορὰ κατὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐκέτι χώραν ἔχει διὰ τὸν ἐνοικήσαντα λόγον ἐν τούτοις διὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς σώματος. Hilary, *De Trinit.*, ii. 24: *Humani generis causa Dei filius natus ex virgine et Spiritu sancto, ut homo factus ex virgine, naturam in se carnis acciperet, perque hujus admixtionis societatem sanctificatum in eo universi generis humani corpus existeret.* Origen, *Contra Celsum*, iii. 28, etc.

VI. Numerous Biblical metaphors have contributed to form and to justify this strange conception, and this fact should warn us of the danger there is in drawing a dogma from a popular metaphor, for every metaphor contains a germ or a relic of mythology. First the terms "ransom" and "redeem," λύτρον,

ἀγοράζειν (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Titus ii. 14, etc.). It could not enter the mind of the first Christians that a ransom could or ought to be paid to God. The souls of sinners belonged exclusively to Satan; from him, then, they must be bought back. In the second place, all the passages in which mention is made of the struggle or victory of Christ against Satan—Luke x. 18; John xii. 31; 1 John iii. 8; Col. ii. 15, etc.

VII. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, v. 1, 1: *Verbum potens et verus homo suo sanguine nos redimens, redemptionem semetipsum dedit pro his qui in captivitatem ducti sunt. Et, quoniam injuste dominabatur nobis Apostasia (diabolus), potens in omnibus Dei verbum et non deficiens in sua justitia, juste etiam adversus ipsum conversus est apostasiam, ea quæ sunt sua redimens ab eo, non cum vi, sed secundum suadelam quemadmodum decebat Deum. . . . .*

Origen, in Matt. xx. 28: Τίνι ἔδωκε τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν; οὐ γάρ δὴ τῷ

θεῷ, μή τι οὖν τῷ πονηρῷ; οὗτος γὰρ ἐκράτει ἡμῶν, ἕως δοθὴ τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν αὐτῷ λύτρον, ἡ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ψυχή, ἀπατηθέντι ὡς δυναμένῳ αὐτῆς κυριεῦσαι καὶ οὐχ ὁρῶντι ὅτι οὐ φέρει τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ κατέχειν αὐτὴν βάσανον.

VIII. Gregory the Great, *Homil. in Evangelia*, ii. 25, 8: *Per Leviathan—cetus ille devorator humani generis designatur.—Hunc pater omnipotens homo cepit quia ad mortem illius unigenitum filium incarnatum misit, in quo et caro passibilis videri posset et divinitas impassibilis videri non posset. Cumque in eo serpens iste, per manus persequentium, escam corporis momordit, divinitatis aculeus illum perforavit.* Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. catech.*, 24: Τῷ προκαλύμματι τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἐνεκρύφθη τὸ θεῖον, ἵνα κατὰ τοὺς λίχνους τῶν ἰχθύων τῷ δελέατι τῆς σαρκὸς συναποσπασθῇ τὸ ἄγκιστρον τῆς θεότητος.

IX. Augustine, *De Agone*, 11: *Sunt stulti qui dicunt: non poterat aliter sapientia Dei homines liberare, nisi susciperet hominem et*

nasceretur de femina et a peccatoribus omnia pateretur. — Poterat omnino, sed si aliter faceret, similiter vestræ stultitiæ displiceret.

X. (*a*). *Cur Deus homo*, i. 11: *Non est aliud peccare quam Deo non reddere debitum.— Omnis voluntas rationalis creaturæ subjecta debet esse voluntati Dei. Hoc est debitum, quod debet angelus et homo Deo. Hic est solus et totus honor quem a nobis exigit Deus. Hunc honorem debitum qui Deo non reddit, aufert Deo quod suum est et Deum exhonorat: et hoc est peccare.*

X. (*b*). *Ibid.*, i. 13: *Nihil ergo Deus servat justius quam suæ dignitatis honorem.*

X. (*c*). *Ibid.*, i. 13: *Necesse est ergo, aut ablatus honor solvatur aut pœna sequatur.—* 14: *Aut enim peccator sponte solvit quod debet, aut Deus ab invito accipit.*

X. (*d*). *Ibid.*, i. 20: *Si me ipsum et quidquid possum etiam quando non pecco, illi debeo ne peccem, nihil habeo quod pro peccato illi reddam.*

X. (*e*). *Ibid.*, i. 21: *Quid, si necesse esset, aut totum mundum et quidquid Deus non est, perire et in nihilum redigi aut te facere rem parvam contra voluntatem Dei? secundum quantitatem peccati exigit Deus satisfactionem.*

X. (*f*). *Ibid.*, i. 21: *Quid ergo erit de te? Quomodo poteris salvus esse. . . . . Si rationes tuas considero, non video quomodo.*

X. (*g*). *Ibid.*, ii. 6: *Illum quoque qui de suo poterit Deo dare aliquid quod superet omne quod sub Deo est, majorem necesse est esse quam omne quod Deus non est. Nihil autem est super omne quod Deus non est nisi Deus. Non ergo potest hanc satisfactionem facere nisi Deus. Sed nec facere illam debet nisi homo. . . . . Necesse est ut eam faciat Deus-Homo.*

X. (*h*). *Ibid.*, ii. 19 and 20: *Misericordiam vero Dei quæ perire videbatur, cum justitiam Dei et peccatum hominis considerabamus, tam magnam, tamque concordem invenimus justitiæ, ut nec major nec justitior cogitari possit*, etc.

XI. Abelard, *Epitome*, c. 23: *Ego vero dico et ratione irrefragabili probo, quod diabolus in hominem nullum jus habuerit. Neque enim qui eum decipiendo a subjectione. Domini sui alienavit, aliquam potestatem super eum debuit accipere, potius, si quam prius haberet, debuit amittere. Theol. christ.*, iv. 13: *Moriendo quidem docuit quantum nos dilexerit, atque in hoc ipso nobis usque ad mortem pro ipso certandi exemplum proposuit.*

XII. (*a*) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, P. iii., quæst. 48, art. 2: *Caput et membrum sunt quasi una persona mystica, et ideo satisfactio Christi ad omnes fideles pertinet sicut ad sua membra. In quantum enim duo homines sunt unum in caritate, unus pro alio satisfacere potest.*

XII. (*b*) *Ibid.*, P. iii., quæst. 48, art. 2: *Christus autem, ex caritate et obedientia patiendo, majus Deo aliquid exhibuit quam exigeret recompensatio totius offensæ generis humani. . . . . Et ideo passio Christi non*

solum sufficiens, sed etiam superabondans satisfactio fuit.

XII. (*c*). *Ibid.*, P. iii., 1, 2: *Ad finem aliquem dicitur aliquid necessarium esse dupliciter. Uno modo, sine quo aliquid esse non potest: sicut cibus est necessarius ad conservationem humanæ vitæ. Alio modo per quod melius et convenientius pervenitur ad finem: sicut equus necessarius est ad iter. Primo modo, Deum incarnari non fuit necessarium ad reparationem humanæ naturæ. Deus enim per suam omnipotentiam poterat humanam naturam multis aliis modis reparare. Secundo autem modo, necessarium fuit Deum incarnari ad humanæ naturæ reparationem.* This *necessitas convenientiæ* is explained elsewhere: Quest. 46, art. 2 and 3, etc. Aquinas rather enumerates than harmonizes every possible point of view. The sufferings of Christ save us now *per modum satisfactionis*, now *per modum meriti, per modum sacrificii aut per modum redemptionis.*

Harnack therefore concludes thus, *History of Dogma*, vi. p. 196 (1899): "*Multa, non multum.* When we review the exposition given by Thomas, we cannot escape the impression created by confusion. The wavering between the hypothetical and the necessary modes of view, between objective and subjective redemption, further, between a *satisfactio superabundans* and the assertion that for the sins after baptism we have to supplement the work of Christ, prevents any distinct impression arising. It was only a natural course of development when Duns Scotus went on to reduce everything entirely to the relative."

XIII. Duns Scotus, *in Sentent.*, lib. iii., Dist. 19 and 20: *Sicut omne aliud a Deo ideo est bonum quia a Deo volitum et non e converso, sic meritum illud (Christi) tantum bonum erat pro quanto acceptabatur et ideo meritum quia acceptatum, non autem e converso . . . . Quantum vero attinet ad meriti suffi-*

cientiam, fuit profecto illud finitum quia causa ejus finita . . . . non enim Christus quatenus meruit sed in quantum homo. Proinde si exquiras quantum valuerit Christi meritum, valuit procul dubio quantum fuit a Deo acceptatum. Divina acceptatio est potissima causa et ratio omnis meriti, etc. Duns Scotus does not hesitate to say that an angel or a righteous man, who had received the grace of a perfect life, could just as well have obtained salvation for us, if God had only willed it so.

XIV. *Council of Trent*, sess. vi. can. 7; sess. xiv. can. 8. *Catechismus Rom.*, ii. 6: *Est integra atque omnibus numeris perfecta satisfactio quam Christus Patri persolvit. Neque vero pretium debitis nostris par solum et æquale fuit, verum ea longe superavit.* This does not hinder the merits of the saints and even those of each Christian from being added to those of Christ Himself, and thus increasing the value of the treasure of the Church.

XV. *Conf. Helvet.*, ii. c. 14: *Improbamus illos qui suis satisfactionibus existimant se pro commissis satisfacere peccatis. Nam docemus Christum unum, morte et passione sua esse omnium peccatorum satisfactionem, propitiationem et expiationem.*

XVI. Luther, *Kirchenpostille*, Ausg. von Francke, i. p. 621: Darum soll auch dies Wort, "Genugthuung," in unsern Kirchen und Theologia fürder nichts und todt sein und *dem Richteramt und Juristenschulen*, dahin es gehoert und daher es auch die Papisten genommen, befohlen sein, etc.

XVII. Gerhard, *Loc. theol.*, xvii. 2, 54: *Quomodo enim peccata nostra vere in se suscepisset ac perfectam satisfactionem præstitisset, nisi iram Dei individuo nexu cum peccatis conjunctam vere sensisset? Quomodo a maledictione legis redemisset, factus pro nobis maledictio, nisi judicium Dei irati persensisset?* Quenstedt, P. iii. p. 346: *Sensit mortem æternam sed non in æternum. Æterna ergo*

mors fuit, si spectes essentiam et intensionem pœnarum; sin respicias infinitam personæ patientis sublimitatem, non tantum æquipollens, sed et omnes omnium damnatorum æternas mortes infinities superegrediens fuit. Hanc ipsam vero mortem æternam cruciatusque infernales non post, sed ante mortem temporalem, in horto oliveti et in cruce sustinuit salvator. Cf. Hollaz, p. 731, etc.

XVIII. (*a*). Socinus, *Prælect. theol.*, c. 16–18: *Remittere peccata et sibi pro ipsis vere satisfieri plane contraria sunt nec ulla ratione simul consistere queunt. . . . . Dum enim debitum remittitur, condonatur; dum vero pro eo satisfit, exigitur.*

XVIII. (*b*). *Christ. relig. brev. inst.*, p. 661: *Alius pro alio pœnas istas dare nequaquam potest. Non enim sicut unius pecunia alterius fieri potest, sic unius pœnæ aterius fieri possunt. Est pecunia ut jurisconsulti loquuntur, reale quoddam; pœnæ vero . . . . sunt quoddam personale, et propterea ejus modi*

quæ illi ipsi qui eas dat, perpetuo adhæreant, nec in alium queant transferri. *Cf.* LIMBORCH, *Theol. Christ.*, vi. 4, 25.

XVIII. (*c*). SOCINUS, *Præl. theol.*, c. 18: *Ubi innocentia, ibi nulla pœna . . . . Quid iniquius quam insontem, pro sontibus punire, præsertim cum sontes ipsi adsint qui puniri possunt!* etc.

XVIII. (*d*). *Præl. theol.*, c. 18: *Dictum est pœnam quam nos propter peccata nostra debebamus, mortem æternam fuisse. Atqui Christus æternam mortem non est expertus, et væ nobis si eam expertus esset!* *Cf.* LIMBORCH, *Theol. Christ.*, iii. 21, 6.

XVIII. (*e*). *Præl. theol.*, c. 19: *Satisfactio, satisfacientem, non modo ab eo cui satisfit alium esse omnino requirit sed etiam eo satisfactionem perficere quod ipse habeat, nec ejus cui satisfit jam esse dici possit . . . .* etc.

XIX. *Catech. of Racow.*, quæst. 380 and 384: *Morte et resurrectione Christi certi sumus*

facti de nostra resurrectione ad eum modum in exemplo Christi propositum id nobis spectemus, eos qui Deo obtemperent e quovis mortis genere liberari. Deinde quod jam nobis constet Christum eam consecutum esse qua posset suis, id est, qui ipsi parent vitam æternam donare.—Hinc perspicio longe plus in resurrectione, quam in Christi morte situm esse in nostræ salutis negotio.

XX. F. Robertson. See especially the sermon on "The Sacrifice of Christ" (*Sermons*, 3rd series, vii.). "The value of the death of Christ consisted in the surrender of self-will. . . . The influence of that sacrifice on man is the introduction of the principle of self-sacrifice into his nature—'then were all dead.' Observe again, not He died that we might not die, but that in His death we might be dead, and that in His sacrifice we might become each a sacrifice to God. Moreover, this death is identical with life . . . . death, therefore—that is the sacrifice of self

—is equivalent to life. . . . Love is sacrifice. . . . Redemption, too, is sacrifice, else it could not be love. . . ."

XXI. Perhaps some will blame us for having omitted, beside repentance, faith, to which the forgiveness of sins is even more expressly promised. And they will be right, but only at first sight. For we have here understood the word repentance in its Scriptural sense as "the conversion of the sinner to God." The Hebrew word *schoub*, which the prophets use to express repentance, means "to turn round," *i.e.*, to turn away from evil and to turn towards God; the same meaning attaches to the words ἐπιστρέφειν and μετανοεῖν. The other, or positive side of repentance, the return of the child to his father, is faith. In order to simplify our statement, we have spoken of the two aspects of conversion as of an organic unity.

RELIGION AND MODERN CULTURE

A Lecture delivered in Stockholm at the Religious Science Congress, September 2, 1897

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RELIGION AND MODERN CULTURE

My Lord President,[1] Ladies and Gentlemen,—By asking me to discuss before you the question of "the relations between religion and modern culture," you have conferred a great honour upon me, but you have also given me a perilous task to accomplish. I would ask you to excuse me if, in the expression of my profound gratitude, I am hampered at the present moment by a feeling of distrust produced by the insufficiency of my own powers and the difficulty of the subject. This question, which on either side brings into open

[1] The Religious Science Congress, held in Stockholm from August 31 to September 4, 1897, was presided over by M. v. Scheele, Lutheran Bishop of Wisby.

conflict the deepest and noblest aspirations of our time, is the burning topic which is ever giving rise to the gravest and most heated controversies. In it are involved the primordial interests of the social and individual life, the destiny of peoples, the future of churches, and the moral welfare of souls. It is to our credit that such discussions ever awaken our passionate enthusiasm; but it is also our weakness that they often make us intolerant. I enter upon this discussion having resolved to tell you the whole of my thought—it would not have been worth while to undertake so long a journey in order to conceal a part of my mind: but I have none the less the keenest desire and the firmest intention to wound the feelings of none, and to utter no word capable of injuring or causing pain to anyone. Those who may differ from me upon this delicate and complex subject will, I hope, have a chance of being heard, and of correcting the errors or filling in the gaps in my speech. Our Congress is not a council; it is a school for mutual

improvement, where we bring our knowledge and experience for the benefit of all, and where we should learn to profit by our very errors. It is by the benefit of this consideration that I am speaking in this place, asking you kindly to grant me your indulgent attention.

I.—The Problem

The relations which exist to-day between religion, viewed as a traditional institution, and modern culture, considered in its principle and general aspirations, are not difficult to define. One word suffices to sum up and translate them; it is the word conflict. On one hand, independent science, which is the free search for truth in every order, liberal politics aiming at the emancipation of democracy and the *self-government* of human society, rational pedagogics, the aim of which is to bring the individual out of the state of tutelage and to endow him with his rights as a citizen who is free and of age, in a word, the modern spirit, which is the link and common expression

of all these tendencies, is everywhere suspicious, guarding itself against the claims of the dominant religion established in the form of a church. It looks upon religious institutions as the incarnation of the spirit of the past, and as the great obstacle to the bringing in of a better state of things. On the other hand, the official representatives of religion, whose mission it is to propagate and defend it, perceive nothing but menace and danger to religion in the discoveries of modern science, in the development of its methods, in the victories of democracy, and in the daily progress of the human mind in the direction of ever-increasing emancipation.

In the eyes of many savants and to many churchmen, the conflict seems therefore irreducible, and the two powers appear to be irreconcilable. *Ceci*, it is said, *tuera cela*. Hence the unbridling of opposing passions in the arena of social life. Modern culture becomes irreligious, because it can see no other possibility of triumph save in the

extirpation of religion itself. Religion, on the other hand, often becomes anti-scientific and illiberal; at times it even aims at bringing once more into subjection the emancipated intelligence of man, because it does not deem itself capable of flourishing or even living, if science is allowed to go uncontrolled, and if man succeeds in rendering himself wholly independent. The destruction of religion or the domestication of science, the triumph of irreligious culture or the triumph of superstition—such are the two extreme solutions which attract the too great number of men who only discern the surface of things, and have only studied the problem from afar. The very fact that you have included this problem in your programme proves sufficiently that you do not resign yourselves to such an alternative. You are too devoted to modern science, you are too much imbued with its spirit and its law, not to feel that science cannot renounce its independence without committing suicide and compromising the

dignity of the mind itself. Further, you have made too deep a study of the history and of the psychology of religion to doubt for a single moment that it has in the soul of man an indestructible root. Even if the sacrifice of the one or of the other of these great manifestations of the spiritual life were possible, it would mean a fatal impoverishment. Science is inadequate as a guide to life, it cannot give it a meaning and a purpose. Science will never tell us, outside an act of faith, why life is to be lived well. Even in the midst of nature, explained in all its mysteries and mastered in all its forces, man would remain troubled like a conqueror vanquished by his own conquests, and resourceless in face of a silent and menacing universe. The triumph of his genius would again end in a prayer and an act of adoration.

Nor, on the other hand, can religion, which is the total life of the soul—that is to say, light and thought as well as feeling and will—stand apart from the general culture of man, for it

is this very cultured man that religion really desires and is destined to inspire, console, and unite to God. A religion which should have become divorced from our culture would be without influence upon our conscience. The proscription of one of these powers by the other cannot therefore be the solution of the problem; much rather do we all, in varying degrees, dream of mutual interpenetration and progressive reconciliation. By what means and under what conditions can this interpenetration and reconciliation, so eagerly desired, be brought about? How are we to bring any improvement and mitigation into the fatal war now being waged between religion and culture, in our society and even in the conscience of every individual? Such is the manner in which the question you submitted to me, and which I am to try and answer, presented itself before my mind. The following study will be divided into two parts: in the first I shall consider the conflict between religion and modern culture in its

objective bearing and in its historical aspect: in the second I shall determine its psychological bearing, and exhibit the problem to be solved in its subjective or individual aspect. Indeed, on reflection one is not long in perceiving that it is vain to seek or to expect any uniform and universal external solution. To conciliate our science and our faith is the inner and sacred task which imposes itself upon the conscience of every man who thinks freely and wishes at the same time to be a man of profound morality.

II.—The Principle of Modern Culture

The high-sounding expressions "modern culture," "modern spirit," "modern science" only present an abstract and vague meaning which needs, before all else, to be defined and clearly determined. They stand for and sum up very many different tendencies or manifestations, some of which may be good, but others of which are certainly detestable. To forestall any misunderstanding, and not to

appear to be defending what ought to be censured, or condemning what is legitimate, it is important, at the outset, to reduce the different activities and spiritual manifestations which make up modern culture to the unity of the principle which constitutes its essence and distinctive character. It is the only way to judge culture rightly and from within, by putting on one side the errors of application or the particular excesses which may need to be reproved. , Now, this unity of principle which covers all the general manifestations and tendencies of the modern spirit in every department is not difficult to discover. A single word expresses it: the word *autonomy*; by which I mean the unconquerable assurance of the human mind, in its present advanced state of development, that it possesses within itself the norm of its life and of its thought, with the deep-seated desire to realize itself by obeying its own law. A few examples will suffice to bring into full light this principle of unity.

It is the custom to date the origin of modern

philosophy from Descartes and his *Discourse on Method* (1637). But modern philosophy only begins in reality with the effort made by the mind to look into itself and to take immediate cognizance of itself in the initial phenomena of consciousness. Now, what is methodical doubt—I mean that preliminary resolution to put all in question—but the rejection of external or traditional authorities and of the ideas based solely upon custom or the words of a master? And, on the other hand, what is the Cartesian principle of holding as true only what appears evidently so to be, except the effective recognition that the reason has its own law within itself—in other words, the triumphant claim to the autonomy of the mind? Since Descartes this autonomy of philosophy has continuously gained in credit, extent, and depth with Leibnitz, Locke, Hume, and Kant; so much so that to-day, when the method of authority ventures to assert itself in this domain, it appears nothing more than a puerile anachronism.

With Kant the autonomy of ethics followed that of philosophy. Conscience is no less independent and sovereign to-day than reason. Duty, in order to be recognized as such, must proceed from the inner imperative law. External authority, elevated to the utmost extreme, is inadequate to create the feeling of obligation. Its prescriptions, however strict and solemn they may be, if they merely come from without, are held to be arbitrary, and remain for the modern man outside the moral sphere properly so-called.

If from philosophy and ethics we pass to the physical sciences, we see clearly that the method of observation, which reigns supreme in this domain, is likewise reducible to the same Cartesian principle. To wish to ascertain the facts for oneself, and to place experience above all authority, is also to constitute the mind the supreme judge in the realm of natural knowledge. The revolution effected in this order by Galileo and his successors completes and confirms that of Descartes

and the philosophers. The authoritative decisions of the Church or of the old Schools have been overcome by the experimental method; for the latter, when rightly considered, is only an application in the domain of the laws and phenomena of nature, and a practical demonstration of the autonomy of the mind.

The same must be said of the similarly irresistible development taken during the last two centuries by scientific philology, grammatical exegesis, and historical criticism. The discoveries made concerning the past history of humanity, the patient study of monuments and texts, the strict re-examination of all traditions have brought about in our way of looking upon the history of the human race, and of religions in particular, a revolution no less profound than the experimental method in our way of looking on the universe. As a matter of fact, the historical and critical method is also a form and a continuation of the experimental method itself—that is to say, it is still the triumph

of the principle of autonomy. No external witness can prevail to-day against the inner and peculiar law of reason, for this sovereign law ever judges both the testimony and the witness. Even when we yield to the testimony of another, it is to our own mind that we are yielding, for we esteem that, after all, the thing is reasonable; so much so that the assent of ourselves to ourselves appears more and more as the sole foundation of all human *rationality*, as well as of all *morality*.

Finally, this principle of autonomy stands out still more clearly in the political and social sphere. Starting from the moral axiom that man is not a slave, that he has a right to belong to himself, the evolution of modern society tends more and more towards *self-government*. The days of tutelage and serfage are ended; the age of civic majority has begun. Whatever the prevailing constitutional forms — whether the movement takes a peaceful course or provokes violent crises—everywhere in civilized mankind, in

the south and in the north of Europe, in the old and in the new world, we observe the same phenomenon—I mean the advent of democracy, which is overcoming every barrier, overflowing and spreading like a great ocean wave.

Such is the modern man. In all the manifestations of his life he obeys one and the same aspiration; by an irresistible effort he tends towards the final conquest and realization of his autonomy. And it is in this very effort and expansion of his inner being that he fatally comes into collision with religion, as it has been established and maintained by the tradition of the past.

III.—Opposite Principle in Traditional Religion

If religion could consist merely in the inner feeling and life of the individual soul, it would doubtless be above or at least outside modern science and politics, and the conflict would not arise. But, as a matter of fact,

it is never so. The faith of the Churches has expressed itself in dogmas and institutions. Now, dogma is no longer religion in its state of purity: the religious sentiment is associated with countless clearly defined philosophical or historical ideas, which were in the past consciously or unconsciously borrowed from a particular historical period of human culture in order to explain the faith. The dogmas of the Church, for instance, are associated with a collection of books, the origin and formation of which are investigated by modern criticism. With regard to the origin of humanity and of the world, the cause of evil and of death, heaven, purgatory and hell, ethics and the relations between the finite and the infinite, they embody and express notions which may and often do contradict the results and discoveries of modern science. How, then, can the conflict be avoided, if traditional religion, in the name of divine authority, attempts to force upon the science of the present day the views taught by the

science of the Middle Ages, and even of antiquity? Let the Churches do what they will, there is not a single movement of the modern mind but interests and disquiets them. Columbus cannot land in America, Copernicus cannot change the laws of the world, Galileo cannot discover the movement of the earth, Richard Simon cannot found Biblical criticism, Kant cannot write the Critique of pure reason, Champollion cannot read the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt, Darwin cannot publish his hypothesis on the origin of species, no savant or thinker can make a discovery of general interest, or open out a new vista into the universe, without the edifice of ancient theology being shaken, and traditional religion, in order to defend itself and avert the danger, being tempted to condemn, by its decisions if not by its anathemas, what it is no longer able either to refute or to prevent.

In order to maintain their venerable dogmas, the Churches are attempting to superpose and impose them upon modern thought, in the

name of an external authority held to be divine. Thus, in orthodox manuals of dogmatics, a history of human origins and a cosmology, reputed to be supernatural, are superposed and imposed upon a rationally established cosmology and history. In like manner, religious institutions, claiming to be of anterior and divine right, are superposed and imposed upon civil laws and institutions. Such being the case, how is it possible for the conflict not to arise in every department? On one side, it is a case of *autonomy*; on the other, a case of *heteronomy*. Without doubt the champions of religion maintain that the principle of this *heteronomy* is the authority of God Himself, to which every reasonable creature is in duty bound to submit. They are right in principle; but, in fact, God never speaks or governs in person; it is always men who, in His name, formulate dogmas and create institutions. So it comes that we are not in reality simply face to face with God alone, who, doubtless, would be able to

reconcile His own actions with ours and render us obedient by inner persuasion, but we are face to face with a clergy and historical social forms which, from without, would fain subjugate the human mind, but whose divine prerogatives and supernatural authority are discussed or even denied by the human mind. The expressions "autonomy" and "heteronomy," to which we have just reduced the tendencies of modern thought and of religious tradition, translate only too faithfully the nature and gravity of the conflict which is being waged on all sides.

The forms and manifestations of this conflict necessarily vary with the epoch and the surroundings. In the East, for instance, where religion pervades the whole of life, and where what we term "modern culture" scarcely exists at all, the conflict is hardly perceptible. It is otherwise in the Christian West. Here the religious problem towers above and complicates all the problems of social and political life. The way the first is stated naturally

carries with it the solution of all the others. In philosophy, what all thinkers are seeking with a kind of intellectual anguish is the conciliation of pure reason with practical reason, and of the harshness of facts with the generosity of the heart; in politics, it is clearly felt that liberal progress can only be insured by endowing the citizens with the inner and moral power to govern themselves. Finally, sociologists are more and more coming to the conclusion that the social question is dependent upon the moral question, and that, in order to secure the reign of justice and to bring about universal happiness, men must be taught to conquer selfishness and to love each other. But each of these problems is only another aspect of the religious problem.

The conflict, the elements of which we have just sketched and defined, everywhere rages in the Christian world, which is also the modern world. It is visible in all countries and in all the Churches. But it does not everywhere assume the same forms, nor has it everywhere

the same chances of being pacified. It takes on one aspect where the claims of modern thought are in open conflict with the tradition of a Church, which, proclaiming itself infallible, declares its dogmas to be immutable and its institutions divine, and which could not, without betraying its very principle, accept even so much as the idea of reformation; it takes on another aspect in the midst of a religious society which, although it may sometimes put forward similar claims, has not within itself a guiding power capable of enforcing them, but necessarily obeys a tradition which its past variations and its present diversities render essentially pliant and elastic, and whose very principle of freedom of inquiry and of personal faith leaves open to all the influences of modern times and to all the transformations of the future. It is right, then, that we should distinguish here between Catholicism and Protestantism, defining more clearly the relations which exist in both between religious faith and modern culture.

IV.—The Relations between Religion and Modern Culture in Catholicism

There is a country in Central Europe where Roman Catholicism is accepted and practised with the greatest sincerity and fervour, where it is represented by the worthiest clergy, proclaimed and defended during the present century by the most eloquent preachers and writers, but where, at the same time, under the inspiration of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and thanks to the shock of the Revolution, modern culture has developed with the greatest intensity and brilliancy in open hostility with religious tradition. That country is my own; it is France—that is to say, the country I know best and the one in which the nature of the conflict between the Catholic religious system and the general tendencies of the modern spirit may best be studied. Nowhere also does the opposition appear more flagrant and irreducible between the reign of autonomy, to which secular reason

aspires, and that of heteronomy, which is the very principle of the religions of authority.

It is far from being the case that between Catholicism and modern reason no attempts at reconciliation and union have been made by men as broad-minded as they were distinguished. There existed, until 1870, a liberal Catholicism rendered illustrious by the names of Lacordaire, Montalembert, the Duke de Broglie, Bishop Dupanloup, and many others. But already struck by the *Syllabus* of 1864, beaten back and violently denounced by Louis Veuillot and the *Univers*, attacked still more efficaciously, although with more apparent moderation, by the Jesuits, this liberal Catholicism was definitely vanquished and destroyed by the decrees of the Vatican Council in 1870. Its most illustrious representatives were condemned, either to humiliating retractations or to subterfuges more humiliating still, as in the case of Father Gratry and Bishop Dupanloup, or else to open rupture, as in the case of Father Hyacinthe in France and of Canon

Döllinger in Germany. But for every victory a ransom must be made. The victory which was then gained, in Catholicism, by the principle of absolute authority proclaiming the personal and separate infallibility of the Pope, was one of those the fatal consequences of which ruin a system even more surely than defeat. At the Vatican Council the Pope was not only set up as the divine oracle of doctrinal truth; he was also proclaimed the universal Bishop, having an absolute right and undeniable power to govern all dioceses and consciences without check or counterpoise. Hence it is the duty of every man to subordinate his thoughts and his will to this supreme jurisdiction, with the result that the only alternative which remains to him is this obedience implying abdication, or resistance which immediately becomes revolt. Founded upon the principle of the authority of the tradition of the Church, of which the Pope remains the infallible interpreter, Catholic theology necessarily dates from the Middle Ages, which witnessed its completion, remaining

practically alien to the tendencies and principles of modern thought. The philosophy and the theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas are exclusively taught in the seminaries as if Bacon, Descartes, and Kant had never come. The decrees of the Council of Trent and the decisions of the Holy Office establish what is to be thought of the books of the Bible, of the Canon, of the form of the text, and of the value of the translations, as if all the labour of modern criticism and exegesis were null and void. In the Catholic Institute of Paris there was a young and very distinguished professor, Abbé Loisy, who introduced there, with much knowledge and tact, the historical and grammatical study of Holy Scripture, and tried, in order to make room for the conclusions to which this study led him, to broaden somewhat the Patristic theory of verbal inspiration. He was denounced in Rome by the Jesuits, condemned by the papal Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, and dismissed by Monsignor d'Hulst, Rector of the Institute, who, to make

assurance doubly sure and in order to prevent any possible return of heresy, did away with the chair of Holy Scripture together with the professor, and established in its place a harmless lectureship of Oriental philology. Abbé Loisy remained silent rather than rebel. More recently still the Congregation of the Holy Office assembled; the question debated was whether one could with a clear conscience deny or even simply cast a doubt upon the Johannine authorship of the famous passage in 1 John v. 8 concerning "the three witnesses in Heaven, who, albeit three, agree in one." The Congregation clearly made answer in the negative, and the Pope rendered the decision binding. So that now Catholic theologians are guilty of a sin against faith if they continue to discuss a problem of verbal criticism, the solution of which might have been thought to depend mainly on an attentive study of the manuscripts.

Hence two very important consequences have followed: on the one hand, the official

theology of the Church and the education of the clergy have assumed a character of growing opposition to modern methods and ideas. So great is the cleavage that all controversy in matters of dogma has ceased between churchmen and secular philosophers or men of science. Among the latter, not one thinks it his duty to take the trouble to refute or even to discuss a dogma or a conception of Catholic theology. On the other hand, scientifically pursued in opposition and open war against the Church for the last two centuries. modern culture has nearly always taken up an anti-religious attitude. Between the sacred and the profane, the laity and the clergy, an impassable gulf has been formed. All communication from one side to the other is cut off; rational arguments are no longer used; contempt alone is poured forth, and this is answered by anathemas from the other side. If the two parties still fight and try to make each other capitulate, it is by pressure of material interests, and by means of political manœuvres or negotiations.

Nothing could have caused more harm to the religious sentiment. From the conflict of which I have just spoken, there arose, during the eighteenth century, what has been termed "the Voltairean spirit." It has perhaps grown heavier since the death of its creator, but it rages none the less throughout the French Press, like a withering sirocco. During the nineteenth century the positive philosophy of Auguste Comte and Littré, the science of Renan, the historical method of Taine and Michelet, the criticism of Sainte-Beuve, and the novels of Zola have almost fatally assumed a character of hostility to Catholic tradition. In social life the battle has been waged with even greater violence. Gambetta's cry, "Le cléricalisme, c'est l'ennemi," has become the motto of the Republic. And, unhappily, by clericalism the masses understand religion itself. In the opinion of the greater number, you are a clerical if you believe in God and pray to Him. The neutral attitude is not permitted. Whoever is not against the

Church is for her. In certain circles it is the mark of a good republican to inveigh against the priests and against God.

On the other side, the Church, in order more effectively to defend herself, has in turn taken the offensive; the clergy have placed themselves at the head of a political party which they lead into the electoral arena with a view to controlling the powers of the State. They no longer fight for truth, but for the exercise of government. The triumph or the overthrow of religion is dependent, not on the awakening of the conscience, but on the result of a ballot or the success of a diplomatic manœuvre. Civil society has secularized the schools, and calculated all their organization in order better to resist the influence of the Catholic faith. But the Church starts confessional schools in opposition to the others, and in turn organizes them in the way best suited to destroy or counterbalance all the action of the lay educational establishments. Such is the

dilemma in which modern society is now struggling.

In such a strife what termination can be hoped for? After the excesses of fruitless violence, wearied with their mutual powerlessness, the combatants long for a little rest, but are unable to attain peace by means of an intimate and lasting reconciliation. A Pope, endowed with a great genius and surrounded with prestige, has arisen, and, for a while, has succeeded in reconciling the Church both with heretical monarchies such as Russia, Germany, and England, and with republican democracies such as those of the United States, France, and Switzerland. So we witness the conclusion of conventions or concordats, tracing conventional frontiers, stipulating mutual concession and consideration, but always accompanied on either side by tacit or explicit reservations. External and impenetrable the one to the other, the two rival powers suspend hostilities without disarming, but remain ever ready to resume

their warfare as soon as they believe their own interest constrains them so to act.

In truth, no sincere reconciliation seems to be possible between a Church immovable in her dogmas and institutions, and modern culture which only develops in obedience to a constantly progressive evolution. Principles, methods, aims, everything is contrary. On the one side, we find an intellectual and moral system in which everything rests upon the authority of the past and tends to a denial of the autonomy of the mind. On the other, we have a system of free inquiry and of perpetual discussion, where everything in the scientific order rests upon evidence alone, in the moral order upon inner conviction, and in the social order upon the government of oneself by oneself. The two powers contend for the complete possession of society and the individual soul, and, by setting up one part of them against the other, even causes them to be internally divided. We then witness within society—and this is true of the

whole of Europe—the formation of an élite or aristocracy of the intellect, devoting itself to criticism, to science, and to independent philosophy, and, casting off all religious and even moral faith, in its desire for greater freedom, ending in a barren dilettantism, content to leave to the ignorant and superstitious multitude the care of fulfilling the duties of life, of submitting to the yoke of religion, and of obeying the constituted authorities. We see the same divorce within the individual soul of those who would retain the privileges both of culture and of religion. A sort of water-tight partition is formed within them, between their heart and their reason, the domain of science and the practical sphere; free and bold in the one, these souls are blindly obedient in the other. Thus they live in a kind of artificial peace, provided they never examine what they do and believe, in the light of what they know. But, besides its being doubtful whether these safety walls can remain for ever, it is plain that, being thus

internally divided, both nations and individuals consume their best energies in a fruitless struggle, and are destined sooner or later to end in the throes of a violent revolt, or in the debility of a general paralysis.

V.—The Relations between Religion and Modern Culture in Protestantism

The conflict, in Protestant communities, is perhaps not less keen and real; but here the relations between religion and modern culture are of a different nature. From external they now become internal. Instead of remaining absolute, the opposition is relative and changing; finally, the two societies, the religious and the civil, instead of being strangers the one to the other, or simply in juxtaposition, are, so to speak, bound up with each other, and are necessarily borne along in the same historical evolution.

From the very outset, the solidarity between the Protestant and the scientific spirit is patent. Both were born at the same time.

The Reformation was, in history, a parallel movement to that of the Renaissance, proceeding in the same direction. The emancipation pursued by the latter in the intellectual and esthetic activity of the mind was brought about by the former in the religious life and in the moral conscience. If the Humanists became intellectually free through reading and careful study of the works of classical antiquity, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin became still more so in religion through clinging to the text of Holy Scripture, the authority of which set them free from the tyranny of tradition. When Calvin was asked how, without tradition, he could receive the assurance that the Biblical revelation proceeded from God, he answered triumphantly: "The Scripture showeth in itself no less apparent sense of her truth, than white and black things do of their colour or sweet and sour things of taste."[1] This is the argument of inner conviction; it is the proof from immediate

[1] *Christ. Inst.*, i. 7, 2.

evidence taking the place of the method of external authority: it is the substitution of *explicit* and personal faith for *implicit* and general faith.

The Reformation, it is true, produced new churches, and within these churches a dogmatic tradition has established itself, with liturgies and confessions of faith. As in Catholicism, this tradition aspires to become immutable, and likewise stands out as a barrier across the path of modern thought. But such tyranny cannot last for long, because it lacks foundation and an organ with sufficient authority. Doubtless the Reformers had not proclaimed the principle of freedom of inquiry; they had only desired to substitute true but no less absolute dogmas for false ones. Yet their example was to be mightier than their doctrine. No one has been able to close the door which they opened. In reality, they were showing how the Christian consciousness, by studying and interpreting the Scriptures, could always succeed in overthrowing the empire of tradi-

tion. The centre of gravity of religion was thus removed from without to within, from a hierarchy to the sanctuary of the conscience. Faith now rested solely on the free consent of the individual. But, since, as a direct result of his culture, the individual religious unit continued to change, how could you expect him not to modify the expression of his faith in an exactly corresponding measure? Thus it comes that, during the last three centuries, whilst Catholic theology has more and more been hardening down in its old formulas, we have witnessed the ceaseless evolution of Protestant theology and its efforts to bring itself into harmony with the progress of civic life and the advance in scientific knowledge.

Thus religion and culture no longer stand over against each other like two motionless and impenetrable masses. On the contrary, the one ceaselessly influences the other, and both are transformed by this mutual action. Theology is taught in the same universities by

virtue of the same right and with the same freedom as all other branches of study. Intercommunication may be more or less broad, but it exists of necessity. As in the case of vessels which communicate with each other, we see the liquid ever tending to put itself on a level, so likewise theology and the modern sciences tend to become harmonized. Scientific methods force themselves little by little upon theologians; sometimes, indeed, it is through the theologians that they reach the philosophers. The greatest and finest works in philology and historical criticism have been achieved in the cells of Benedictine monks or in schools of theology and by theologians. The right to read the Bible and the duty of interpreting it and of assimilating its intrinsic truths have necessarily given rise to an historical and critical study of the sacred text. But, at the same time, the results arrived at from this study have in turn modified the traditional notions entertained respecting the Scriptures. The old dogmatic conception of

an infallible oracle, equally valuable in all its parts and in its letter, has been succeeded by a more living and more human historical conception. The inherent originality of the sacred writers, the influence of the external circumstances and of the surroundings in which they wrote, and the environment in which their general education was carried on, have enabled us to see clearly the limits of their thought, the element of contingency in their works, and, at the same time, have forced their interpreters to translate their old language, to transpose their ideas, to distinguish the spirit from the letter, leaving the letter at its date and in its setting and retaining only the spirit to answer the needs and questionings of our age and society. The same change has been going on with regard to the Canon of Scripture; it became impossible to maintain its absolute character as soon as its history had been discovered and set forth. How was it possible henceforth to refuse to acknowledge the laborious progress and the uncertain or

arbitrary nature of the ecclesiastical decisions —often slow in being given—by which the Canon was at last settled ?

The method of authority which had at first prevailed in Protestant theology was ruined at the same time. It insensibly gave place to the method of historical observation and of internal evidence. Widely open to the influence of modern philosophy, Protestant dogmatics changed with each succeeding century. It could no longer find anywhere else but in Christian experience the δός μοι ποῦ στῶ, the basis on which it might reconstruct its edifice in a new style.

The history of dogma no less radically destroyed the naïve dream of its immutability. No sooner were dogmas looked into closely than it was seen that they were undergoing a process of evolution exactly parallel to that of the history of general philosophy. Each bears upon its forehead the ineffaceable date of its birth and the stamp of its origin. After a slow process of formation, dogma enters

upon a crisis which transforms it. We said, a moment ago, that it is ever the product of a blending of Christian feeling with conceptions and phrases borrowed from the atmosphere of contemporary culture; now, however deeply blended it may be, this mixture necessarily forms an unstable compound, constantly disaggregated by historical criticism. Whereas the element of Christian experience remains throughout, its theological expression or explanation is not long in growing old, but ends by giving way before conceptions which are more consistent with the knowledge of the day and the new modes of thought.

Thus a continuous evolution in beliefs and religious institutions has arisen and continued in the bosom of Protestantism, thanks to the inner pressure of modern science. Resistance on the part of the representatives of tradition may be more or less protracted in different countries; it ever ends by being conquered or by slowly giving way, because it lacks a dogmatic foundation. For Protestantism pos-

sesses no tribunal, no magistery able, in the name of God, to declare the dogmas of the past intangible. The ecclesiastical authorities who administer them are themselves caught in the current of the stream and unconsciously carried along by the power that impels the ship and all the passengers. Under penalty of condemning themselves, the Churches which have sprung from the Reformation cannot exclude reform from their order of the day. Besides, even if they wished to attempt such a thing, at the risk of a mortal contradiction, they would yet lack the means and the power to succeed. For here religious and lay society do not form two circles closed to each other. The civil power everywhere predominates over the Protestant Churches: whether the clergy are appointed from above by the head of the State, or whether they owe their existence to the suffrage of their own particular community. Hence the conflict is never irremediable; it is always within the power of the faithful to settle it when

they wish and how they will. Thus the government of the Protestant Churches, like that of civil society, reduces itself finally to the same principle of inner autonomy and *self-government.*

We may sum up, in three propositions, the main results of the action of modern culture upon the religious consciousness of Protestantism.

1*st.* Dogma is seen to consist of two elements of unequal value: of a content of permanent Christian experience and of a necessarily imperfect and changeable intellectual form.

2*nd.* This intellectual form, which is renewed with each succeeding century, will not allow of our granting to the traditional dogmatic formulas any but a relative and symbolic value.

3*rd.* On the basis of Christian experience, there has been up to the present, and there will go on in the future, a ceaseless evolution, which not only justifies, but also renders in-

dispensable, the efforts of religious thought, seeking ever to express itself in a manner more agreeable both to its object and to the general culture of modern times.

Far from being alarmed at such an outlook, religious men ought to find in it an additional source of confidence and joy. In the order of living beings and for all organisms this power of eliminating the worn-out elements and of assimilating new ones is the characteristic sign of life. When this power disappears the organism ceases to sustain and renew itself; death is at hand. Nothing, in our eyes, could better establish the divine origin of Christianity, or guarantee its future destiny, than the marvellous power with which it seems to be endowed of freeing itself from worn-out forms and old ideas, in order to assimilate new truths and to adapt itself to every degree of culture, answering the calls and moral needs of every race and of every age.

VI.—The Problem Transferred from the Objective Order of History to the Subjective Order of Consciousness

The outcome of the religious evolution of Protestant thought has been to cause the problem which we are studying to pass from the objective order of social life into the subjective order of consciousness. It thus becomes immediately transformed, and we see the chances of a progressive solution appearing and gaining precision.

The problem is transformed in two ways. First, the terms themselves are changed. Instead of appearing to be two external and fundamentally incompatible forces, religion and culture are reduced to their psychological roots, and are seen to correspond to the exercise of two inner activities of the mind, equally legitimate and constitutive of the moral life. We are led to cast aside the primitive and rude conception of religion which imagines its essence to lie in the institution of an external

authority and sees in it an instrument for the governing of souls. Everything that is external in religion—dogmas, rites, social organization, hierarchy—grew up in the course of history and is constantly modified by history; all these things fall under the jurisdiction of criticism which, once started, can never more abdicate. But all this is only the body of religion. Its soul is elsewhere; it lies in the consciousness of the religious man, in the inner experience of piety. Now, piety is *the sensitiveness of the heart for God.* The permanent Christian consciousness will therefore be the religious consciousness of man, induced by the experience of filial piety wrought in the soul of Christ. This experience fully answers man's need of being at peace with God, and of knowing himself to be forgiven in his state of sin, consoled in his condition of physical and moral distress, in a word, of hoping against hope in the triumph of justice and life, in a world apparently given over to evil and death. Such a feeling is

fostered by prayer; it is born of the faith of the heart, that is, of an act of trust in Him on whom the human creature feels itself to depend, in common with the whole world. Who fails to see that religion, thus regarded as a feeling and an experience of the soul, not only eludes the contradictions of science, but even forces itself upon science as a normal phenomenon which the scientist would be guilty in neglecting. The opposition of science and religion is therefore no longer absolute; it reduces itself to the natural diversity between the mystical and the theoretical or rational faculties. And have not these faculties an equal right to receive in every man a real and healthy satisfaction?

In the second place, the problem is transformed by the manner in which it appeals to each man's conscience. It is no longer a question of seeking an objective and general solution, but rather a subjective and individual one. The scientist, for example, is mistaken, and fails to see the difficulty in its proper light,

if he imagines that he has only to vindicate his freedom of research and the independence of his own thought against the tyranny of a religious dogma or of an ecclesiastical institution; he must turn his gaze within, and examine how he will regulate for himself the inmost relations of his scientific thought with the religious aspirations of his heart and the requirements of his own moral life. Then only will he see the problem whole and the conditions of a loyal solution. So, likewise, the religious man, the man of a particular church, the defender of an established tradition, is mistaken and fails to see the difficulty in its proper light if he thinks that he has only to defend the religious institution and the theological dogma against the attacks of a foreign and hostile science. It is impossible, provided he also is a cultured man seriously examining himself, that he should not recognize, in his own culture and in the activity of his own mind, the tendencies which alarm him in others—I mean some inklings of doubt and of

anxiety as to the absolute value of the theses he is himself defending with such energy. In each one of us there is a philosopher asking the believer to give a reason for the faith that is in him. It behoves us, then, not to confine ourselves to the struggle which is going on within society; we must, if we are wholly sincere, listen with calm attention to the inner dialogue which, in each one of us, constantly arises and continues between our heart and our reason, our science and our conscience. How can we despair of a pacification which shall be at least relative, seeing each one of us possesses within himself a secret accomplice and an ever-eloquent defender of the opposite side to the one which he is bound by duty or impelled by passion to represent and uphold?

VII.—Piety and Morality

Going a step farther, let us pursue at once this analysis and this synthesis. Religion, being our relationship and personal communion with God, reduces itself to *piety.*

Culture, on the other hand, standing for our relationships with our fellowmen and with the world, constitutes *morality*. The problem will therefore be, in the last resort, to establish an organic link between these two elements which together make up the plenitude of our spiritual life.

To speak of morality, as we have already seen, is to stipulate *autonomy*. The moral subject is conscious of a law inherent within himself. He is moral only on this condition. By obeying this inner law, he is obeying his true nature, so that the realization of this guiding law in all the activities of his life is itself the guarantee of his independence. Duty accomplished is the only true foundation of liberty.

On the other hand, piety is the gift or consecration of our being to God. We desire, as religious people, to do His will and to subordinate our own to His: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven; Thy kingdom come." Moral *autonomy* in religion

thus becomes *theonomy*. Do we not find ourselves face to face with the same contradiction from whence we started and which seemed to us irreducible?

Truly there would be a contradiction were *theonomy* to equal *heteronomy*, if God were a stranger and external to our being, if He imposed His will upon us from without, like a law differing from that of our true nature. But the really pious man, even less than the philosopher or the scientist, cannot become resigned to a conception of religion so primitive and low, which places man and God in front of each other as though concluding I know not what legal alliance. It is too puerile an anthropomorphism, which, if it were transformed into a doctrinal thesis, would empty the religious consciousness of its most precious content, namely, the inner presence of God in man, and its mysterious and ceaseless working within all the manifestations of his personal life. God lives in us, and we live in Him. *In Deo vivimus*,

movemur et sumus. His spirit makes us what we are, when we are such as He wishes us to be. He grants us both to will and to do, the intention and the strength, according to His mysterious will, so that we hear and recognize His voice in the innermost voice of our conscience. Hence, to obey the will of God is, according to the Gospel of Christ, to obey our own law, and the theonomy of piety becomes a truly moral autonomy. These are the two essential aspects, the practical and the ideal aspects, the visible and the hidden elements, of our total consciousness.

Thus it is that the morality of modern culture and the piety of eternal religion are reduced to an organic and living unity. It is precisely this deep unification of religion and ethics which constitutes the most striking feature of the Gospel. For the Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount, there is nothing in the will of God that is not human and moral, and nothing in human morality that

is not religious. In other words, religion becomes the soul of morality, while morality remains the body of religion; or, again, morality is religion expressed in conduct, as religion is morality epitomized in its ideal and eternal principle. Peace is restored with unity. There are no longer two laws: a divine law over against the law of conscience; nor two truths: a supernatural truth over against natural science; nor two powers; nor two societies? a divine society and authority over against civil society and temporal authorities; there is but one life, one society, one general culture, permeated within, sustained and purified by the divine leaven which has been introduced into humanity in order to transform it and save it from decay.

VIII.—Mutual Penetration of Religion and Culture

Let us here offer ourselves the comforting spectacle of this organic action of an inner religion upon all the manifestations of indi-

vidual and social life. To the violent and sterile conflict which we have just described there succeeds the closest and most active solidarity. Being an inner inspiration, a deep-seated life, kindled within the soul itself by the spirit of God, piety will not act from without upon science in order to curb it beneath a strange law; it will not impose its methods or assign its limits to science, still less will it dictate its conclusions. But it will call forth and maintain, within the heart of the scientist, the sacred flame of the religious, that is to say, absolute love of truth. Moreover, is not this pure love of truth the very principle and mainspring of modern science, the sacred sign of the scientific spirit? For mark well: in order to be quite honest and absolutely without reproach, the man of science must be able to free himself from all interested calculations, from all considerations of glory and of lucre, from favouritism and spite; he, too, must practise daily, in all his experiments and researches, self-denial, abso-

lute devotion to his work; he must have what has been rightly termed "the religion of science," which, doubtless, is not perfect religion, although it is at least one of its phases or applications in the domain of the intelligence. "The first of Christian truths," as Pascal said, "is that truth must be loved before all else."

Are we dealing with politics and the amelioration of the condition of man as a social being, the same religion will cause the same inner and beneficent action to be felt. It will impose upon politicians neither a constitution of divine right, nor a particular system of taxation, nor laws dictated by an alien authority. Full liberty will be granted to civil society to manage and ensure its own government. But it will inculcate a higher motive power in the heart of political men; it will inspire them with a disinterested love of justice and feeling for the people, and, in so doing, will fecundate all their ideas and enhance all their undertakings. You

esteem nothing more despicable than the race of politicians who make a trade of politics and a means of satisfying their ambition or their fortune, and you are right; but, in these inferior souls, let piety once awake; let it cause the religion of justice and of self-sacrifice to take root and flourish; this holy inspiration will forthwith transform these men and turn them into benefactors and heroes, to the advantage of the whole social body.

We find the same elevating and purifying influence upon art and literature. Here, again, it is not the mission of religion to create a particular kind of literature, to be called sacred in opposition to profane literature, an ecclesiastical art over against a merely human art; no, it is a question at once of more and of less; its mission is to kindle, in the hearts of those who have devoted themselves to art, the worship of ideal beauty. How numerous are the temptations, at the present time, which assail the artist and the poet? How are they to escape them? How are they to resist the

promptings of the mercantile muses which promise them an easy and rapid success? If their soul is void of faith, if the presence of an inner and incorruptible witness does not sustain their courage and vigour, is it not to be expected that they will lower their ideal and profane their genius? When in art and poetry the religion of art becomes extinct, what constituted the glory of a civilization becomes its shame and the most potent agent of corruption and death.

Finally, shall we speak of social morality and its duties? How far more necessary inner religion is in this question than in all the others! It will not create a code of morals different in kind and higher than ordinary morals. On the contrary, it will do away with casuistry, and will efface the distinction between precept and mere counsel. It will teach men to renounce themselves and find their pleasure in the happiness of their brethren. Its task, a truly supernatural one, is to make us triumph over our selfishness. It does not

establish special duties towards God, but it turns all our natural duties into religious duties, by the religious spirit in which it bids us accomplish them. Christ summed up His Gospel in two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself." But we fail to understand them aright if we separate them, and imagine we can fulfil the one while we neglect the other. In reality the two form one single commandment. Religious men, you do not love God as He wishes to be loved, if you do not love and serve Him in the person of your neighbour. Remember the words: "Whatsoever ye do unto the poor, the sick, the prisoner, the child, ye do it unto me." Zealous philanthropists, you do not love your neighbour as he is to be loved, if you do not love him in God, if you do not see and respect God in him. Yes, in order to raise the poor you must see in him, as Kant said, what makes every moral being an eternal end in himself. We only really love

souls when we respectfully adore the divine guest which they enshrine. It is the feeling of this common presence of God which is the true foundation of a living and practical solidarity among men.

Science, politics, art, social ethics, when religion has once become an inner influence acting from within outwards, it dominates nothing, but penetrates and regenerates everything. Human culture needs this divine inspiration. When it is weakened or disappears, civilization as a whole is bowed beneath its own weight; decadence sets in, ruin is nigh at hand. Religion is truly that vivifying salt of which Jesus spoke, and which, when once it has lost its savour, nothing can replace.

IX.—The Influence of Culture upon the Forms of Religion

If human culture has need of religion in order to remain elevated and healthy, religion, if it is to be a living thing, needs in like

manner to remain in communication and close touch with human culture. This does not mean that religion borrows from culture that which constitutes the efficacy of its own action. But, owing to the ceaseless criticism which this culture obliges religion to exercise, religion step by step shakes itself free from all that does not really belong to it, throwing off antiquated forms and returning to its exclusively religious and moral principle, whence alone it draws all its efficacy. It is the same with religion as with those elixirs which, when they are diluted in too much neutral liquid, remain inactive. Only concentrate them in essential drops and they will regain all their virtue. Criticism, when practised with faith and piety, does not kill religion; on the contrary, it makes religion appear younger and stronger in each succeeding age. If it transforms the old ideas, it is not in order to destroy them, but, on the contrary, to render them more truly religious; for, with Christ, it can say: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

Shall we furnish some examples of this? "God is a spirit," said Jesus. How far are we still from conceiving and adoring God in His full and perfect spirituality! Under what anthropomorphic forms do we not represent Him in His relations with the world and men? We are ever confining Him within the limits of physical sensibility. We invest Him, more or less vaguely, with I know not what circumscribed existence, or rather we clothe Him in a body which localizes Him in space and time. It seems infinitely difficult for us to believe in a pure and free Spirit, everywhere present, ever determined, doubtless, because He is conscious; but always superior to all these determinations, present in every place and at all times, ceaselessly acting, because His very essence is to act. The absolute Spirit does not dwell as a body among other bodies; He dwells in spirits and reveals Himself immediately in them by the profound feeling which He gives to them of His presence. He is ever at work, acting

from within outwards, and not from without: He is an inner God. When piety adores such a God, it at once witnesses the disappearance of the autonomy between the natural and the supernatural. The question of miracles is settled in the eyes of the pious. They everywhere adore the acts of their Heavenly Father, and at each step they discover fresh reasons to thank Him. The world of phenomena does not trouble them; they willingly surrender it to the investigations of science. What matters to them is the presence of their God, the feeling of which depends solely upon the energy of their faith. Alas! we are still so far from this purely religious energy of faith that we hear many excellent Christians say that to believe thus in the pure and inner action of the Spirit is to them an impossibility. At all events, let it not be said that such adoration is of an inferior nature, for it requires on the part of the believer a more thorough self-surrender, a more disinterested love of truth, a more perfect submission

to the will of the Father, and a greater conformity of our piety to that of Jesus. Is it not worship in spirit and in truth that God requires?

If religious criticism brings God nearer and renders Him more living to us, it has had the same effect with regard to the person of Christ. You know what the figure of the Messiah of Nazareth had become in the theology of the Fathers, the definitions of the Councils, and the subtle theories of Scholasticism. A metaphysical entity, a verbal abstraction, the person of Christ had so far receded from men, by being absorbed into the Trinity, that there was no longer any connection between Him and us, and that, in order to restore communion, a just and necessary compensation had compelled resort to all that hierarchy of angels and saints which the Church was at the same time setting up between earth and Heaven. Then, when the whole of this Christian mythology broke down beneath the blows of the rationalism of the

eighteenth century, the figure of Christ seemed not only to vanish from the heaven of metaphysics together with the notions of the Middle Ages, but it even disappeared from the reality of history. Now, is it not the pious labour of historical exegesis and criticism, at work during the last century and a half, that has recovered it and rendered it more living and attractive than ever to us? Jesus Christ has truly risen again in our midst. We have recognized His voice, touched the hem of His garment, and, for our century, sick, losing its strength and led astray by too many physicians, now, as in the case of the woman in the Gospel, a health-giving virtue has proceeded from this hallowed touch. Jesus has thus taken His place once more in the human family. History has restored to us the benefits of His Incarnation. He has once more become our brother by flesh and blood, by experience and speech. And in this concrete humanity the true character of His Divinity has shone forth with added lustre.

We have at last renounced our carnal ideas of greatness and glory, and we have learned to recognize the dignity of the Son of man in His abasement, His glory in His humiliation, and His Divine character in His perfect and sinless humanity. Forced, by the very results of historical criticism, to go back to the principle of His filial piety, to recognize in His religious consciousness the very essence of the revelation He brought to men, we have understood that the supreme law of the Kingdom of God consists in saving one's life by surrendering it. Finally, in the person and life of Christ, in whom this law was fully exemplified, we have hailed and clung to the highest manifestation of the life of the spirit, that is to say, of eternal life.

The conception of the Church is likewise transformed at the same time and for the same reasons. Doubtless there is here something which disappears and which must disappear: the sacerdotal order, the divine right of the clergy, all supernatural monopoly in the preach-

ing of the Gospel and the dispensation of Divine grace, the magic value of the sacramental act, everything that Catholic tradition places in the front rank and that Protestant tradition tries to maintain in part, in order to facilitate the external government of souls; all these things become daily more indifferent or more repugnant to the religious and moral consciences of the cultured men of our time. The revolution, begun in the sixteenth century by Luther, will be completed. Many are frightened or scandalized, deeming that this crisis in ecclesiastical institutions means the ruin of religion itself. Men of little faith, you ask what will remain when the present ecclesiastical order will have ceased to exist. There will remain what was in the primitive Gospel of Christ and in the Apostolical communities in days when this ecclesiastical polity, which seems to you so necessary, was not yet in existence. There will remain a religious communion and an active association of brothers: there will remain the family of God spreading

by the natural expansion of the Christian life through every generation and race. Is it not the property of faith to create the society of believers, that is to say, to unite them in the same act of adoration and in a common enterprise of missionary activity? Did Jesus wish to accomplish anything else when He called together His first workers and organized His first disciples? Be reassured; no society will ever lack form and organization. But everything must be restored to its proper place. Institutions, while ministering to social life, do not create it; it is the social life which, by a natural law, gives birth to rites and institutions. This is why the latter, however necessary they may be, are yet not absolute. They change and become renewed in the course of the ages. When a nation passes out of the feudal into the democratic state, it likewise passes through periods of storm which are at times so violent that those timid conservatives, who believe that the very existence of the nation is bound up with the old *régime*, are filled

with terror. The crisis passes, liberty triumphs; order is restored upon new bases, and fresh generations, now liberated, cleave to the land of their fathers with a love all the greater as they find there for the first time, together with freedom, a sweet and real fatherland.

Thus modern culture acts upon the forms of religion by its criticism, and religion elevates and purifies criticism by its spirit. Through this twofold operation the very conception of faith is at the same time deepened and broadened. Faith separates itself from the forms of religion, only to turn to what constitutes its essence and to lay hold on religion in its perfect spirituality. Losing its external and material supports, it is forced to become more and more an inner and exclusively moral act. Throwing off all superstition, it lays aside all intolerance. It does not wrap itself up in aristocratic individualism or disdainful esotericism. On the contrary, if each one, in the compass of his own particular church, makes this same effort to go from the circumference

to the centre of his Christianity, all will finally meet and find themselves united there. The more truly Christian we become, the greater grows the number of brethren we discover. The diversity of forms and ceremonies is no longer a bar to the communion of souls. God is a discerner of hearts. Let us imitate Him. We shall reach each other in the depths of the soul long before we think the same thoughts and speak the same tongue. From the central point of view which we reach through the consciousness of the one thing necessary, I do not say that the barriers of creed disappear, still less that they ought to disappear any more than the ideas of the family or the country. I say that they become lowered, that they henceforth possess no greater value than that which really belongs to them, that is, a relative value, allowing us to discern even now the eternal Kingdom of God extending like an azure sky above all mountains and beyond all valleys. The time is at hand. Already religious communion is being estab-

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